# TOWARDS ISLAM

THEOSOPHY, SPIRITUALISM, NEW THOUGHT,
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, HIGHER THOUGHT,
NEW LIFE, ETC., ETC.

BY

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IMAM OF THE MOSQUE, WOKING

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TO MY FRIEND

BABU MUHAMMAD

OF

LUDIHANA, PANJAB, INDIA

IN TOKEN OF

HIS ZEAL FOR ISLAM

AND OF

THE LOVE I BEAR HIM

# INTRODUCTION.

IN his recent sermon at Sheffield, the Archbishop of York observed that the Church of England had lost its power in the daily lives of the people; or, to use his own words, "The Church repels". The truth of this remark is not confined to his own Church. It is equally true of every Church in Christendom. The Archbishop has simply formulated what has been felt and observed by thinking men for the last hundred years.

The empty pews and vacant benches in churches and chapels, have begun to proclaim with silent eloquence what the rise of a multitude of new movements in the West, since the later "eighties", has already declared. The purity of the teaching of Jesus, which received its origin, undoubtedly, from a Divine Source, as the Qur-án says, began to suffer very soon after the close of his ministry. His was a beautiful religion — simple and natural; the same that had been preached by various messengers of God before him, and which was given again to the world, some six hundred years after, in its perfect form, by Muhammad. The old-time theory of the "angered Deity", and the reconciliation of man through sacrifice, which has always been the

corner stone of man-made religions everywhere from time immemorial, also crept into the faith of Jesus, and became the superstructure of the coming Church in the West.

Islam came to restore the faith of Jesus; and to give a conception of religion that was entirely new. The study of human nature, and the development of the mind, became the chief ends of religion in Islam. The glory of God was taught to consist in the edification of man, and the knowledge of God was made dependent upon the knowledge of the human mind. In a word, to know the mind, and to explore it and its potentialities, actual and real, was given as the sole object of religion.

The Western mind slumbered on for centuries. With the fall of Constantinople, came a revival of learning, and Muslim culture brought the denizens of the monasteries to the doors of the Muslim seminaries; but the materialistic culture of the last century again befogged the horizon; and all the psychic pursuits which were still in their nascent condition in the West, were brought to an end.

The Western world became more interested in material advancement, and began to extend its activities to the conquest of Eastern lands — which movement brought them into contact with the Eastern philosophy of the Mind and the Soul.

The light has always come from the East; and the Western mind again felt the need of

orientation. Further study of various systems of religion in the East, alienated the occidental from the Church wrongly named after the name of Jesus. The mind began to revolt and to assert itself; it wanted to see the Christ, whom it failed to find within the walls of the Western Church. The Christ came to them from the East in the person of Jesus, and if there was any likelihood of recovering him, it could only be by going to the East. The study of the East consequent thereupon, has given birth to various new religious movements in the West.

The human mind is a universe in itself; it has inuumerable sides, emotional, social, intellectual, moral, ethical, spiritual and so forth. On the other hand, we are of different temperaments; everything does not appeal to every unit of humanity; variety is the order of the day. Different units become interested in different aspects of the human mind which are, after all, different branches of the religion from God.

Socialism, Rationalism, Ethics, Theosophy, Spiritualism, New Thought, Higher Thought, Christian Science and many other persuasions of recent growth, are only the materialization of the various forms of human thought; they are, as it were, assets of human society, and part and parcel of the complete culture of the human mind.

Religion cannot be perfect, unless it be capable of dealing with all of them.

How can a religion claim to have been revealed by God, if it does not give proper food

to all human aspiration? Human nature and all its component elements were created by God; and their food and nourishment must come from Him. If we find what is needful for our physical sustenance in His work in nature, then surely that which comes to guide humanity in the form of revelation must be intended to supply the needs of our mental and spiritual nature.

The Qur-án claims to possess this requisite. Not only do the ideals of these Western movements form the various themes of the Qur-án, but the Book itself shows the way to approach them.

In this volume, I have included some of the movements which are more or less of a religious character, in the received sense of the word; though religion, in the Qur-ánic sense, means everything which appertains to the human mind.

As human efforts cannot be perfect without guidance from God, so these Western movements are not free from defects; and I cannot find in them any adequate system for reaching the goal.

Here I attempt to show that these movements in their highest and best aspects, come within the pale of Islam. I have dealt with their different phases in the light of Islam, and as they overlap each other at certain points, I have had to repeat from time to time, what I have already said in connection with one, when dealing with another. For this, I must crave the reader's indulgence. In order to bring the book

within easy reach of the general public I have tried to reduce the cost as much as circumstances will permit. For the last five years I have not been in the best of health, and in all my activities I have had to look to the assistance of others. In this respect I am chiefly indebted to my friend Mr. Rudolf Pickthall, who has been a real help to me in various ways; and who has kindly read the proofs of this book. I am also indebted to Mrs. Nassema Ahmad and Mr. A. J. Tongue.

Khwaja Kamal-ud-din.

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# TOWARDS ISLAM

## CHAPTER I.

## ISLAM AND WHAT IT MEANS.

IF you look with an observant eye on the universe around you, you will find everything moving towards progress. Everything in its first stage seems to possess some inherent qualities, which it awaits time and opportunity to bring to fruition. Progress and not retrogression; advancement and not reversion; in short, every step in Nature, is onward and upward. It has a prescribed course before it, which being implicitly followed, brings its latent faculties to actuality. The religion of law and obedience thus seems to obtain all around us, and to be strictly observed by every atom in Nature. All the various manifestations of Nature depend on the strict observance of the Law for their very creation, existence, up-bringing and fructification. Nay, the very complementary relations which various objects in Nature reciprocally hold, and the mutual service they render, are only the outcome of the submission yielded by these manifestations of Nature to Divine Laws, i. e. the Laws of Nature. This is Islam. In these very terms

Al-Qur-án, the Book of Islam defines it: — "Do these people seek for themselves any other religion but the religion of God? Do they not see that the whole of Nature around them — everything which is in heaven or earth, gives submission to God for its very existence?"[1] "The religion with God is Islam"[2].

In the above words, the Qur-án gives us the religion of Nature. But is not man a part of the same Nature; "a mighty atom", as someone has called him, the best product of Nature, the finest handiwork of God? And if so, is it possible for him to be without a religion? To hold such a position would be to be untrue to the very constituents of his nature. Every atom in Nature has found its place in the human body. Man is the universe in miniature — a microcosm, in the scientific term. Every organ in him follows the religion of Law and Obedience for its very existence. In other words, every organ performs its respective functions in complete submission to certain fixed laws. The very minute they fail to do so, it brings serious illness or death. Therefore, man cannot as a whole, have any other religion but that which is strictly observed by the various components of his body and nature. Religion to be of service to man must be after his own nature, and so the Qur-án says: — "Nature given by Allah — the very Nature upon which man has been given his

[1] The Holy Qur-án, chap. ii, ver. 136.
[2] The Holy Qur-án, chap. iii, ver. 18.

frame — this is the true religion"[1]. Thus the Qur-án gives us our religion — Islam, the religion of Law and Obedience, the faith of submission to Divine Laws in order to work out our own nature.

THE OBJECT OF RELIGION. This leads me to another phase of the subject. What then is the object of religion? The Qur-án formulates it in the following words: — "Those who follow revelations from God, that is, the religion given them by God, are on the path of guidance, coming to them from their Creator, Nourisher and Evolver, and they will become successful"[2], through what is called self-unfolding. The word used for "successful" in the text is *falah*, which though popularly meaning "success" literally means unfolding. Like everything in Nature, we have got also various latent faculties in us. If a mighty oak is concealed in a little thing like an acorn, if a mango tree, a banyan or any other big tree, with all its branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, can potentially become epitomized in their respective seeds, then remember that there are thousands of things concealed in the human frame. If a clot[3] of blood becomes evolved into a beautiful human frame on the physical

[1] The Holy Qur-án, chap. xxx, ver. 30.

[2] The Holy Qur-án, chap. ii, ver. 5.

[3] The Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation from God in the following words, which refer to that greatness and honour which awaits every man if he follows the Divine revelation of the Qur-án and which a clot of blood in the embrionic condition contains: —

"Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most Honourable. Who taught (to write) with the pen, taught man what he knew not." (chap. 80.)

plane, it also possesses things of rare beauty to be developed on the mental, moral and spiritual planes. If physical growth out of the genital seed comes only through the observance of certain unchangeable laws, then moral, mental and spiritual growth also await their manifestation when human faculties work under similar laws. To give such laws is the function of religion, and the object of religion, therefore, is to furnish man with a code of life whereby he may work out his Self-Unfolding — all his potentialities seeking actualization, and in this respect, Theosophy and Spiritualism follow Islam.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION. And to whom should this religion be given, and in which place? A question so simple to answer, but never rightly answered by the followers of the various religions. Religion coming from God for the uplifting of humanity, should be given to every man in every place wherever he may be. Has the God of all nations and races been partial to any race or community, so far as our physical sustenance is concerned? The sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the rain and all the other functionaries of nature whose existence and work is indispensable for human growth, have never been denied to any member of humanity. If God has shown no distinction between man and man, and observed no difference between race and race in this physical dispensation, how can He be otherwise in things spiritual? He must give religion to every community without distinc-

tion of race or colour. The premises were clear and the logic simple; but no one, before the advent of Islam, came to the right conclusion. Every nation, though claiming Divine inspiration for the origin of its faith, would not award the same privilege to any other religion on the surface of the earth. They took other religions as coming from anything but God. Their narrow-mindedness created bigotry, hatred and discord; separated brother from brother, and tore to pieces the very fabric of that universal brotherhood of man, to be established under the universal Fatherhood of God. This state of things went on, till the Holy Qur-án was revealed, and the Book, in the opening word of the first chapter, uprooted that narrow-mindedness when it said: — "*Al hamdu lillahi rabbil-Aalamin*" — All glory and praise is due to Allah the Creator, Nourisher and Evolver not of one community or of another, but equally of all races, communities and creatures. Again the Book says: — "There has been no nation on the earth which has not received a Warner from God"[1]. "Every race has had its Messenger; every community its guide"[2]. Thus the last word of God gave divine origin to every religion which was then existing in the various parts of the world. The God of the Qur-án or Islam is not a tribal God — the God of Abraham or the God of Jacob — but the God of all races, communities and nations. A

[1] The Holy Qur-án, chap. xxxv, ver. 25.
[2] The Holy Qur-án, chap. xiii, ver. 7.

Muslim, therefore, believes, or is bound to believe, in the divine messengership of every great prophet raised in any country — China, India, Persia, Palestine, Egypt, Europe or America, and I have only to refer to the following words of the Qur-án in support of my statements: "Ye (Muslims) tell (to the world), we believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, we accept whatever has been given to Moses, Jesus and to the other prophets of the world. We make no distinction between prophets and prophets. We only submit to Allah"[1]. We are worshippers of God and not of the prophets, if we revere them, it is simply because they brought us word from our God. No matter who he was, if I, as a Muslim, came to know that such and such a man was a messenger from God before the Last of the sacred race came, he is my prophet, and his words, in their original purity, my Bible. These can only be the basic principles of the Universal Brotherood of Man, the aim and object of Theosophy and Spiritualism, as well. If dreams are not realities, no object can be attained without having some principles to guide us in our steps to achieve the goal. Leaving apart Universal Brotherood, doctrinal differences have made enemies even of those born of the same father and mother. Religion makes associates and disassociates, and I fail to see how Theosophy can

[1] The Holy Qur-án, chap. ii, ver. 136.

work out universal brotherood without having any concern with the religious beliefs of its members. Attempts in the direction of proselytizing no doubt create discord, but after all, religion only has succeeded in welding conflicting elements into a harmonious whole, where community of race and colour has failed. Islam came with the above solution to fraternize the whole world. To admit the divine origin of every religion in its purity is to finish the half of religious strife; and to accept the prophets of others as your own, is to pave another one-fourth of the way towards unity, the rest will not cause any trouble; it would bring the world to a better understanding, if the teachers of different religions would observe the following injunction in the Qur-án, when preaching their own truths to others.

UNIVERSAL MISSION OF THE QUR-ÁN

With this broad-minded allegiance to all the prophets of the world, a Muslim still adheres to the Qur-án and sets his Book above the other Bibles of the world. It may seem anomalous to some, on the very face of it, but this paradoxical position is not without its justification. The Qur-án itself gives reasons for it, where it discusses the necessity of its revelation in the face of all other revealed Books: "When a thing is rendered of no good or disappears, we send a fresh similar thing, or a thing better than the one sent before"[1]. In this verse the Book refers to Nature

[1] The Holy Qur-án Chap. ii, ver. 106.

for illustration. If things created in Nature, for our benefit, cease to perform their functions rightly or disappear, a fresh supply comes as their substitute. This rule of supply and consumption, or corruption, if I may be allowed to say so, holds good in every department of Nature. When the supply of water from above is either consumed or becomes vitiated through mixing with earthy matter, the coming of new rain is necessitated. The Books before the Qur-án, no doubt, came to every country and race from God, but unfortunately, for reasons which I need not discuss here — say, want of means of preservation, for one — they could not keep their integrity. Human adulteration was added and no Book of Good remained without additions and subtractions. Many Books of God disappeared totally, and all suffered much from human hands. The Qur-án in various places referred to this human manipulation, and in this very way showed its necessity; but the world of religion needed thirteen hundred years more to accept this version of the Qur-án. Only some fifty years ago, no one in Christendom would believe that the Qur-án had very rightly declared that the Bible had not been free from human interference; but now, it is an established fact that all the Books of God, excepting the Qur-án, have either, as in the case of one or two, become absolutely unintelligible to the human mind; or, as in the case of all other books, have lost their original purity. This verdict has been passed by the Christian and Judaic

writers on the Old and New Testaments. If such had become the condition of Divinely-revealed books which came to nourish our soul, the Divine rule of supply and consumption will apply, and its functions will find their manifestation in the revelation of the Qur-án. The logic seems to me very simple; but ignorance or prejudice, or both, are apt to benight the human mind and render it incapable of accepting the truth. A man would not take a glass of water to quench his thirst if the contents had become polluted by the touch of a human hand; but he would willingly drink, to the very last dregs, that glass of what was elixir in the beginning, when it came direct from God in the form of Revelation, but which could not afterwards remain free from human handling. If religion came to man through Revelation, how can we appreciate its very beauties when the revealed words do not reach us in their original shape? If God once cared to make His Will known to us through words revealed to prophets, why should He keep silent when His very Will has become dimmed and befogged, for its true appreciation, through human, tampering? If He is now the same God as He was in the olden days, and if His interest in us has not become slack, He must send us a new Book, if the old Scriptures have lost their pristine beauty. This simple logic the Qur-án advances to establish the need of its revelation in the presence of other Books, and the fact of its universal mission to the human race.

Theosophy cannot deny the above conclusion. Theosophy is based upon revealed truths; its knowledge comes through revelation; it believes in those lucid and happy moments when the human spirit reads transcendental truths, coming to it, when in a trance, from the Highest Power; it also believes in the uplifting of the spirit to that extent when the spirit itself reads truths appertaining to the Divine Essence. In this respect Theosophy and Islam are again one and the same; but can Theosophy refer to any specimen of revealed knowledge coming to humanity through the above-mentioned channel? The Vedas are a locked treasure and the Bhagavad Gita cannot claim to be a universal gospel dealing with the various and variegated sides of the human mind. The rest of the sacred literature of the world cannot admittedly claim authenticity, and therefore cannot give a true idea of what revealed truths from God mean. But for the Qur-án, the whole stock of Divine Revelations would be a myth and mystery. Besides if the working out of occult power, and creation of cosmic consciousness is, or ought to be, the object of Spiritualism and Theosophy, they cannot look to any revealed book other than the Qur-án for guiding our steps to the goal.

## CHAPTER II

# REQUIREMENTS OF THE REVEALED BOOK.

IF to work out the hidden faculties of the human mind is the object of religion, then, as I said before, the Book from God, or in one word, Religion, should enlighten us upon the following things:

1. Human capabilities and capacities.
2. The way to work them out.
3. The relationship between God and man for the accomplishment of that object.
4. The relationship between man and the nature around him.
5. The relationship between man and man.
6. The way to work out these relations.
7. The life after death.

I need not say anything about other books or other religions. Let their adherents think for themselves whether the faith they believe in gives them sufficient light on these questions. Islam, or the Qurán, has, however, made these seven things its chief theme. It enlightens us on these seven subjects and gives us the rules and regulations required.

In my humble opinion, a religion, cannot be accepted as a divine institution if it fails to educate us on these points, or to show us the right

path, which, being trodden, brings us to our desired goal — the full unfolding of ourselves.

Theosophy and Spiritualism have not their own revealed books. They accept the revealed books of others as their own, but they do not accept them in their entirety but reserve the right of clarifying truths out of them. A wise course, if the sacred literature has not been free from human interpolation; but could not God do the same for us when His words became intermingled with human thought? If He could reveal His truths to evolve spirituality in olden days, He could do the same in the coming times when the truth became polluted. Can any school of religious thought lay its finger on anything in the sacred literature for which pristine purity can be claimed? Upanishads are, after all, *smritis* and not *shrutis,* and therefore, not heavenly inspired writings. The Gita no doubt, contains revealed truths, but it has also suffered from human hands. It does not deal with the question of universal brotherhood in its teachings. Can it throw sufficient light upon the above-given seven problems of human life? I fail to find them all in the Gita. It is a treasure of the rarest divine gems to adorn a spiritual neck, but a spiritual body has got other members as well. The Qur-án is the only Book comprehending all these problems.

HUMAN CAPABILITIES. "Certainly We created man in the best make, then we render him the lowest of the low".

Man, having every constituent part of nature

in him, has been given the goodliest fabric. He can soar to the highest of the high; but at the same time, he can descend to the lowest degradation. In other words, while everything other than him in nature has been given a limited scope of progress, man's area of progress knows no limits, and he is capable of going to the opposite extreme as well.

The ascertainment of human capabilities has been a big problem for the human mind. Different solutions from different quarters have created different rules of life on moral, ethical and spiritual planes. It is a problem that gives rise to different ethics and different politics. The subject, however, is too big for these pages to be dwelt upon at length. Suffice it to say that philosophy and religion previous to Islam have done great injustice to humanity. Everywhere man was taken as the personification of very low desires and passions. His physical nature was regarded as a serious drawback in his way to progress. Some made him so degraded, that they thought that sin was innate in his nature. He could not escape evil, and was therefore condemned to eternal perdition, but for a certain Divine Economy which came to secure him salvation only two thousands years ago, though humanity remained a victim to misery and evil till then, from a time unknown. Buddha made man unworthy of his very existence. Trouble and tribulation were his lot and his only escape lay in absolute annihilation. Old Vedic philo-

sophy would regard the human body merely as detestable shackles for the express purpose of impeding spiritual progress. The Persian religion made man a helpless and abject plaything in the hands of the Gods of evil and good, while Grecian wisdom made him a poor victim to Nemesis and others. These various notions of humanity, prevailing in different climes and times, entailed all kinds of sacrifices, atonements, austere penances and intermediaries, according to the religions involved. Modern philosophy, of course, took the opposite view. It came to redeem humanity from the conception entertained of man in ancient days. Rationalism would make man capable of every progress. These two opposite views, old and modern, both possess some truth, but Islam gives man his true position. The Qur-án says[1] that man has been given the goodliest equipment, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually; he is born free from sin, capable of observing all Divine laws and able to make every possible progress. In Islam, a baby which dies at its very birth must go directly to heaven. In contradiction to Islam there are other theologies which make hell the abode of such a child, if it has not been brought under certain ceremonies by the priest; because according to such theologies, man came into this world with a tainted nature. He was

[1] The Holy Qur-án, chap. xcv, ver. 4 Certainly We created man in the best make. (ver. 5) Then We render him the lowest of the low. (ver. 6) Except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward newer to be cut oft.

born a sinner, and must go to hell, if not purified. Peace be on Muhammad, who raised the level of humanity to the highest zenith. Every man, he says, comes into the world *with a pure and immaculate nature,* capable of soaring to the highest of the high, not because he is the son of a Mussulman, but, as the noble Prophet says, "the son of man". Heavenly life and the best of progress are the birthright of every human child, but he has got the dark side of it to face as well. He is capable of going "to the lowest of the low", as the Qur-ánic quotation says. How to acquire what our birthright gives to us, and avoid the degradation to which our error in judgment or wrong discretion renders us liable, has been clearly laid down in the verse next to that which I have just quoted: "Those who believe in Divine Laws and act upon them will see a reward which will never be cut off," i. e. everlasting and constantly progressing. In short, if these are our capabilities and shortcomings, we can easily understand the requirements of a religion which is designed for us. Religion should lay before us rules and regulations, which, when acted upon, bring our latent faculties to fruition. We are not "left in the lurch" simply, that we may be in need of "some hand to bring us up from the pit of degradation". We do not deserve perdition at our birth, as we did not do any wrong personally, that we should be in need of salvation. Our nature has got no taint in it at our birth, and we need "no blood to wash away our

sins". Sin is not a heritage, but an acquisition which can be avoided. For this very reason, al-Qur-án did not use the word salvation as the object of religion. Nay, the very word is insulting and a libel on humanity. To admit the need of salvation is to admit self-debasement and degradation. No doubt we do sometimes bring ourselves to that undesirable condition; but it is through the use of our own wrong discretion, and is therefore our own acquirement, and not a gift from God, as sin would become if we believe in tainted birth. The word used by the Qur-án in place of salvation is *Falah,* meaning success, self-unfolding, self-expresion, evolution, development or realization of latent faculties, actualization of potentialities, or in one word, full fruition of what is hidden in the human life-germ: — and this is what the word "Jannat" itself literally means. This is the true Muslim conception of "Jannat", which in Arabic stands for the word "Paradise". One who has got thoughtful ears and a sound heart may well give heed to what I have said here of Jannat, the Muslim heaven of which I will deal in some detail later on[1].

THE WAY TO WORK OUT THESE CAPABILITIES. THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM. What I have written before will enable the reader to understand the ways enabling us to work out our capabilities. The true knowledge of

[1] See page 50.

our capabilities lies with our Lord, the Creator of our nature: and to Him we should look for our guidance. The God of the Qur-án as well acknowledges this our demand on Him. In this respect the Qur-án says: "And upon Allah it rests to show the right way" (chap. xvi, ver. 9). If such is our nature — a repository of innumerable beautiful faculties — our simple belief in this and that dogma will not work out our hidden powers. My belief in the skill of a physician cannot cure me of headache, neither will his chopping off his own head bring me any relief. The only remedy lies in getting the right prescription from him; nothing but acting on that will bring me health. Religion must bring us certain broad laws, commandments and regulations to regulate and guide our life and bring us to our goal. This is what Islam means, and this was the religion of all the Prophets of the world, including Jesus himself. Jesus was only preaching Islam when he said: "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil the law. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled". "He who observes and teaches the law will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, and he who does not do so will be the least there". So says the Lord of Christianity in his Sermon on the Mount; and in the face of this religion of Jesus, which is no other than Islam, I fail to see any justification for what has been fathered upon him by the subsequent teachers of the Church, with Paul to begin with, in the

West. Complete submission to the Divine Laws given to us for our uplifting, is the key of all success. The God of Islam is not so much interested in all the worship and glorification which we offer to Him in our prayers, as He is in seeing the accomplishment of what He has laid down in our nature. Divine glorification under Islamic teachings lies in human edification. Lip gratitude and words of thanksgiving carry no weight with the Lord. Real gratitude to our Creator consists in our doing our utmost to work out that great divine purpose for which man was made. I have just said, in the words of the Qur-án, that man is capable of ascending to the highest of the high and descending to the lowest of the low, and can only achieve the former and avoid the latter through strict observance of the Law.

The religion of commandments and obedience should not be confused with legalism which leaves no discretion to human judgement. In every walk of life we have some colossal truths which are unchangable and unalterable, to guide our footsteps, and to help us to make right use of our discretion at each important step of life. There are the two ways at each step of our life, and on our choice depends our coming felicity and adversity. If poster signs and land marks are a great help in our ordinary journey, are we not in need of such directions to finish our journey of life. Human experience, as well as knowledge through suffering and persecution, is no doubt a guide. Our legislation is also the outcome of human experience;

but human knowledge and observation cannot discern what the eye of the Lord would do, besides if the chief aim of human endeavour is to work out those noble faculties which differentiate humanity from animality, it is a plain truth that all that we have got from human experience in the way to guide us, goes to a greater extent to serve our animal side, and there is very little in human writings to work out our noble latent faculties. Should we not look to God Who reposed this high capability in our nature for guidance? The Qur-án does not come with hard and fast rules of life; it gives certain broad principles with ample scope for the use of ones own discretion; it is a land mark; at each step, it discloses two ways, as the book itself says: — And (We) pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways (Qur-án chap. 90, ver. 10).

It gives a hint and acts as a reminder of God's unchangeable ways. Have not scientifc researches brought home the same truth to us? Our discoveries in scientific realms only bring us to certain unchangeable laws working on certain planes; but in our application of those laws, our discretion is free, and in all our activities, each law brings us to a great harvest if we respect it. What is true of the physical plane, is the same of the ethical, moral, and spiritual planes. We start with axioms and postulates in our mathematical working, though some of the axioms do not seem to appear to be true; but we have to accept them as true, and in the long run, we find them so.

Could we do away with such axioms and postulatess in our moral and spiritual progress? If not, the Qur-án comes to give us such axioms and postulates. It marks out certain boundaries and land marks, and it fixes certain sign-posts, but the rest you have to do yourself. Its sole object is to enable you to make proper use of your judgment and save you from errors of discretion, but the rest you have to do yourself. Who can deny the true wisdom of such a course? Some missionaries, finding their own book devoid of such enlightenment, try to make the defect a sort of negative virtue, and assert that the Qur-án, in laying down certain rules and regulations, has interfered with human free will. I wish they could use the so-called freedom of will in other pursuits of life. We do need a certain prescribed course, and it is in strict observance of that course, that our discretion will never be on the wrong side. In order to create in us an aptitude to observe the law strictly, man is in need of certain lessons and exercises of discipline. He must learn how to avoid sin or going against the law. The best way to create in us that nature, is to create in us the habit of giving up such things as are already our own, because the desire to get things, of whatever kind they may be, from others, sometimes tempts us to do wrong. To be more explicit, suppose I need money, it becomes sin when I try to get it from others by unfair means; but if I have learnt the habit of parting with my own money and giving it to others in charity,

I am not likely to rob them of it. Similarly, eating and drinking and sexual instincts, or in other words our various appetites, stir our activities. If we move in a wrong direction and gratify our desires with things that do not belong to us, or which we have got no right to use, we commit wrong; but if a person knows how to abstain from the use of even his own things when his appetites are excited, he will not go after the things of others. This self-discipline we achieve in our days of fasting. Fasting is not starvation. In certain hours of the day we learn how to face acute hunger, and in abstaining from satisfying that hunger, to abstain from the use even of our own eatables and drinkables. If I know how to deprive myself willingly of the happiness that arises from my own married state, and this to please my God, in the month of fasting, how can I do anything illicit to displease Him? These self-disciplinary exercises were given to us in the form of what is called the "Five Pillars of Islam" — Declaration of your Faith, Prayer, Fasting, Alms-giving and Pilgrimage. If a person makes a survey of every phase of criminality or breach of the law, he will find that the same violation occurs in our attempts to possess ourselves of, or use wrongfully or be wrongfully attached to such things as we are ordered to give up under the observance of these Five Pillars of Islam, while they are our rightful possession and we are rightly entitled to hold them: but we give them up willingly and voluntarily to please

our Lord. If such has been our habit, how can we go after the belongings of others?

The overweening attachment to our own opinion, or the overweening weight which we give to our judgment and volition causes any amount of mischief in the world; but in the declaration of the Muslim formula, "La ilaha illallah" we do declare that we subordinate our judgment and volition to the Great Will on high. Exaggerated ideas as to the value of our own time, and unwillingness to spend it for the benefit of our fellow beings, are further causes of the greatest possible harm to the world. But five prayers in every day are ordained for us to wean us from slavish devotion to our own affairs. Eating, drinking and the company of the other sex, wrongly indulged, are responsible for three fourths of the offences which I find in any penal codes of the world; and the most salubrious check to the intemperate hankerings of man's nature I find in the observance of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Objectionable love for filthy lucre is another great factor of wickedness, but the institution of alms-giving, in Islam, gives us reason to laugh at others who abjectly worship Mammon. Our love for our country is, no doubt, a noble passion, but the abuse of it, in the form of so-called "patriotism" gives rise to bloodshed in the world. This false notion, this wretched idea of patriotism has ever been the cause of fighting, wars and the rising of one nation against another. Love for one's country is a noble thing, but it

becomes a sin of the darkest dye when it is exercised against the will of the Lord and at the expense of other nations. For man to purge himself of this most mischievous passion, there is but one way. He must cut himself off from his own house, his own people and his own country at the call of the Lord; and this discipline, a Muslim learns when he performs his Hajj (pilgrimage). A Muslim enters into the Holy Land of Arabia. There he denudes himself of all his clothing — the sign of worldly respectability and distinction, and the means of adornment and embellishment. He uses only one or two sheets — sufficient to cover his body. Shorn of every possession, money, house, home, children, a Muslim reaches the door of his Beloved, like a lover, he makes the round of His house and throws his head in prostration to Him on the bare earth: "Dust he is and to dust he goes". Then he makes sacrifice of an animal — the personification of what may be called the animal nature in man. Pilgrimage, as the Prophet says, is the final discipline to create the Muslim spirit in man, whereby he learns to give up willingly all that he has, the possession of which sometimes induces him to commit sin. Muslim readers may take it from me, that the sacrifice of an animal on the day of Hajj (pilgrimage) is a symbol whereby he has to declare willingness to kill the animal that is in him; and if he is unable to accomplish that self-abnegation after performing his sacrifice, he has only done something fetish and he simply believes in fetishism.

## RELATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

The conception of God has much to do with the moulding of human character. We know very little of Him — in fact, all our knowledge of Him consists of certain attributes taught of Him by one religion or another. The ancient conception of the Deity could not inspire man with love for Him. He was understood to be an implacable Ruler, Whose anger, when once exited, demanded some sort of sacrifice for its pacification. He could not forgive others sin, as His mercy must needs demand some reward before being shown to any. A sacrificial smoke only, could please His nostrils, and animal blood or human gore was agreable to His sight. Fulfilment of the law with mathematical exactitude, was the character of His rule, and any breach of it would excite wrath, and bring all kinds of calamities on the His human race; such ideas, more or less, were prevailing almost everywhere, when Jesus appeared. He came, and gave us a more lovable conception of God. "Our Father in Heaven" was the epithet by which he styled the Ruler of the Universe. It was the relation of the father and the son and not that of the ruled and the ruler, between man and God, which Jesus wanted to establish. In every accent and stress of love, the gentle and meek philosopher from Galilee would speak of his Father. But it was "your Father and my Father" and not only as his Father, that the son of Mary in Judaea would speak of God to His other sons. Soon after him, however, too soon,

this spirit of filial love which Jesus wanted to inculcate in man, of God, vanished when the old theory of reconciling an angered deity through some kind of sacrificial atonement, developed anew at the hand of St. Paul to fit the new faith to Greek and Roman dispositions. Christianity became paganized, and the blood of the Son was needed to pacify the anger of the Father, and wash out the sin of His other children. This conception of the deity was prevalent also in other parts of the world, when Muhammad made his appearance. He put an end to all such impious notions, which in no case were creditable to the Author of the Universe nor to the author of such conceptions of Him, when he said, "Allamdu lillah Rabbil Aalamin". The first verse of the opening chapter of the Qur-án enumerates four divine attributes, which are the source of all the ninety-nine other attributes mentioned therein. Before, however, I comment upon them, I should like to remind my readers of what I have said as to the capabilities of man and the object of religion. Man came with a perfect and immaculate nature. He came with wonderful potentialities and with capacity to make unlimited progress. It is in consideration of these capabilities of man that Allah, the Muslim name for God, reveals his first attribute to be "Rabb". "Rabb", of course, is wider in its significance than the word "Ab", which in Arabic means father. "Rabb" has four meanings attached to it: one who creates, one who nourishes, one who maintains, and one, who, cre-

ating in us various capacities, supplies us with the necessary wherewithal to bring them to development. In one word "Rabb" in the last sense means the Evolver[1], Who not only works out hidden powers, but organizes and equips them to meet the needs of every stage, until perfection is reached. But for this, we need many other things, which should exist before we come to existence, as their existence is necessary for our existence on this earth. We need the light and heat of the sun and moon; we need the air, the clouds and many other things; and He Who came to provide all our needs before such needs came into existence is Rahmán, the second of the four attributes given above — the beneficent Lord Whose bounties are unlimited — which came to us without any desert or merit on our part; who looks to the need of every creature without making any distinction between one and another. Rahmán, in short, is that merciful God Who shows His mercy to us without any compensation; a conception which dispenses with the need of any sacrifice, atonement or intercession. If He can shower on us rains of blessing, not by way of reward for any action on our part, but simply out of His beneficence — and this is the meaning of the word Rahmán — can He not likewise show His mercy in forgiving our sins without demanding any compensation, as the advocates of the doctrine of sacrifices and atonement suggest?

[1] Foot note Page 17.

The third attribute is Rahm: one Who gives a hundred or a thousand fold of reward to one good action on our part. The words "Rahmán" and „Rahím" both take "Raheem" for their root, which means mercy. But the two attributes refer to two different kinds of mercy; the one shown out of grace and not in consideration of, or reward for something. Under this mercy our God created what we find around us in heaven and earth, and is thus indispensable to our existence. In this dispensation, He makes no distinction between man and man, or race and race. But the mercy of Rahím, the third attribute, finds its exhibition in the reward of human actions. We have been assured under the third attribute that our action will not be fruitless. But at the same time, to make man energetic in life, the same attribute goes to warn us against an inactive life. The Rahmán God has given us everything needful; but the material benefits would be of no use unless we bring the blessings of His beneficence upon our actions. The sun, the moon, the earth, are necessary to produce our food, but they will be helpful to us only when we go to till the land. Then comes the fourth attribute; Máliki Yaum-id-Din, the Owner of the Day of Judgment, and the Master of the Requitals. To keep us within proper limits, we have been reminded of this fourth attribute, but one thing should be chiefly considered in connection therewith. The God of Islam calls Himself Master of the Day of Judgment and not the judge, because the latter, I mean the judge,

is bound to administer justice in strict observance of the law. He must punish the offender where the law leaves Him no alternative. But one Who is Master or Owner of the Day of Judgement, as well as of creatures to be brought under judgment, cannot be compelled to adopt harsh measures to satisfy the ends of justice. All those other religions, which make the salvation of a sinful man dependent on punishment being administered to him, or to some one else in his place, received their theology from this wrong idea that God is judge. Consider Him Master of His own laws, and not a judge who is servant of the law, and you will find Him forgiving you without punishment being administered to you or to save others. Moreover, this fourth attribute suggests the relation of the owner and the owned between God and man, in accordance with the meaning of the word "Málik". An owner cannot afford to punish his belongings unless for correction, or rectification in case of error. It is the idea of reclamation and not of vengeance which actuates the Lord of Islam in punishing His own creatures. Therefore the fourth attribute of God, "Máliki-Yaumiddin", conveys the idea of love and punishment together.

To sum up, these four attributes, Rabb, Rahmán, All-mercy, All-Compassion and for All-Beneficence, ready to do everything without recompense, coming to reward a thousand fold for one action, and only on rare occasions to use His discretion of punishment, when it is necessary for rectification.

Suppose we had no revealed Book in our hand and no epiphany through any of His messengers, but had to find our own God from the nature around us. Do what you will, I say, you will find the God of Nature to be the same God of Islam. Put all your theologies and all that you have conceived of your God to the test of Nature and reason, and I assure you, you who are not Muslims, you will find your belief with nothing to stand upon. It is Allah, Rabb-al-Aalamin, Ar-Rahmán, Arrahím, Máliki-Yaumiddin, to Whose existence, rule and kingdom, every atom in nature bears testimony. The whole of the Qur-án is simply a commentary on these four names. All the laws and regulations given in the Qur-án, when pursued, will order our life in accordance with the requirements of these four attributes. To be virtuous is to lead such a life. "To walk humbly with God" means to imbue ourselves with Divine attributes in Islam. Everything which goes against the demands of these four attributes is sin. This sums up the whole of the Qur-ánic injunctions. If it relates some events of some great men, called prophets, it is only in illustration of lives that acted up to these four attributes. So Allah is the centre of the whole Qurán, and everything moves around Him. Need I add that a Muslim, therefore, sums up his whole religion when he says, "La ilaha illallah". There is no deity or God but Allah, because Allah is the only word in all the languages of the world which has never been used for any other thing or personality but for one great God.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE AND BETWEEN MAN AND MAN. The Muslim formula of faith that there is no object of worship but one Allah, was not taught for the purpose of making up any deficiency in Divine glorification. The God of Islam is not jealous in the sense that He cannot bear to see other deities on the same footing with Him. No, to think so would be an insult to the Muslim conception of God. If we believe in the one-ness of God, it is because such a belief forms a great factor in the mould of human character. It regulates the relationship between man and nature, on the one hand, and between man and man on the other. If I believe in the greatness of only one God, the whole universe is either on the same footing with me or is subordinate to me; because my belief in the one-ness of God will not allow me to accept any other human person or thing as greater than myself. Hence, to my seeing, there are but three degrees in the Universe to me, who believe in the one-ness of God, namely, those who are subordinate to me, myself, and God, Who alone is above me. Therefore my belief in the unity of God leads me to regard all mankind as equal to me, and the rest of the world subservient.

Here I should like to say a few words to establish the relationship of man to the rest of Nature in the words of the Qur-án; and I will deal also with the question of equality between man and man. "And we have made everything in heaven and in the earth subservient to you". Man in this Qur-ánic

sense has been declared to be the Lord of the Universe. In the fourth section of the second chapter of the Qur-án, Adam, the representative man, has received homage from the angels of the earth and the heavens. Angels [1] in Muslim theology are divine functionaries who move all the powers in nature. The said episode has been narrated in the Qur-án to show man as one who has to rule, not only nature, but these workers of Nature as well. Before the advent of Islam, various elements, as well as some manifestations of Nature, were the objects of our adoration. The sun, the moon, the water the air, all were our Gods. It was, therefore sacriligious even to think of getting any service from them. Need I say then, that if the human attitude towards them was that of a worshipper, material science could not hope to grow. Hence we find no material sciences flourishing before Islam. The Qur-án came and gave us the gospel of bringing down all these deities of olden days to the ground.[2] And when, by our belief in the God of the Qur-án, we saw these gods at our feet, we began to find out ways whereby we might get service from them and ultimately laid bare the secrets of modern science. Islam thus came to give a forcible impetus to knowledge, and the result was the present scientific system which received its inception at the hands of the Muslim. If we believe in one God, I say, it is not to add to the dignity of Allah,

[1] See Page 174.

[2] He has made the rivers subservient to you. And he has made subservient to you the Sun and the moon . . . and He has made subservient to you the night and day (chap. xiii, ver. 32, 33).

but it is to add to our own uplifting. How can we entertain any spirit of emulation or equality with Him if we regard some man as God? This being so, we lose all chances of achieving all that has been attained by these great men who happen to be reverenced by some of us as our gods. All those personalities which have been deified by man from time to time were constitutionally equal to their worshippers, and constitutional equality does demand mental, moral and spiritual equality. Our belief in such equality would actuate us to aspire for equality, but the attitude of worship, misapplied, has made a wreck of all our noble capabilities. Islam, the religion of the Unity of God, came to establish the equality of man and the subservience of Nature. Before that coming, man either had not found the first incentive to emulation, that is, the certainty that however great might be the powers and capacity of other men, his own were just as great if he would but use them; or he had forfeited his own inherent prerogative over Nature by bowing down and worshipping that which had been provided for his service. If our belief in the equality of man gives rise to all democratic principles, so necessary for the health of human growth, our belief in the subservience of Nature inspires fruitful researches in the scientific realm, and adds to our comfort and civilization. These two principles, have been very lucidly taught in the Qur-án—which also suggests efficacious ways to work them out. This part of my subject I leave for a separate Volume, as it is too big to receive justice in these pages.

## CHAPTER III.

# LIFE AFTER DEATH.

BELIEF in life after death is an essential article of faith in every religion. It has a most wholesome effect in moulding human character, and is at the same time a source of consolation to the disappointed heart, and a treasure of happiness to one in distress; especially when the misery that comes to him is undeserved. It is moreover an efficacious check on wickedness and iniquity, even in cases where there is the least chance of detection.

On the other hand, disbelief in accountability for his actions after death will naturally weaken a man's sense of responsibility. Morality, in the absence of such belief, will become only the soundest method of securing happiness in life, and, therefore, merely a matter of expedience. These will be no incentive to practice virtue for the sake of virtue, and no person will even shrink from committing wrong, if it serves his purpose, provided he can avoid, or disregard, public censure. But all this, as a sceptic would say, is apology and nothing more. It does not, of itself, afford a ground for belief in a life beyond the grave.

Spiritism, popularly called Spiritualism, has, however, arisen in modern days to combat Materialism of this kind. Spirits of dead persons have been seen and talked to, so the report goes, by some of the new creed, which has managed to secure support from certain of the luminaries on the scientific horizon — Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle among them. Some of my best friends are Spiritualists, and have had personal experiences of this sort; and I have not the least reason to doubt the veracity of their statements.

Besides, such experiences are not new to Muslim divines. The Church in the West may brand them as devilry and witchcraft, as she used to brand scientific researches in the days of Roger Bacon; but Islam has no need to question them, for it has an extensive literature on the subject dating from very early days. I may observe, however, that such experiences, being personal, cannot afford a substantial proof for others to believe in the life hereafter. A sceptic would accept the story of the Spiritualist as a true statement of what the latter thought he had experienced, but might explain it away in a variety of ways — illusion, imagination etc.

Again, people who claim to have such visits from the world beyond the grave, forget to note or tell all the circumstances which attended their spirit-experiences, and so make their case weak. Moreover a good deal of swindling, unfortunately, is going on in the name of Spiritualism·

though the creed in my belief is very opportune in these materialism-ridden days.

Finally such a method of proving life after death, is not of permanent value. It is like the miracle of olden days. A miracle might very well satisfy some of those immediately around its worker, but it became a mere story in subsequent times, and as such, could not command universal acceptance.

Beliefs, like that in question which constitute a basic principle of religion, should be founded on rational grounds. These, however, need not necessarily come within the scope of our senses, especially if the things to be proved lie beyond our normal comprehension. Reasoning by analogy may be helpful, but it is not sound logic and is often misleading. We may, however, safely refer to one class of phenomena in nature to prove another, if the principle underlying both is one and the same. Most of our knowledge, indeed, in the realm of science has come to us in this way. The Qur-án adopts this line of argument where it proves the life after the grave. I do not propose to say here anything more on the subject; as I write chiefly for those who belong to one or other persuasion that form the subject of this book. They, as such, accept life after death as reality. I have dealt with the subject, however, in another book which I have written for those who are interested, more or less, in having things explained on rational bases[1].

[1] Revelation of Truths (Higher Studies in Islam Series).

HEAVEN AND HELL. The subject will remain incomplete without giving some idea as to the Muslim conception of Heaven and Hell, and I may give here a portion of a talk which I gave to some of my Theosophist friends at Madras in 1922, when discussing the theory of the Re-incarnation of the Soul[1].

In this connection I think I must give here the Muslim conception of Heaven and Hell. With many, and I should say with almost all adherents of faiths and creeds, to secure entry into Heaven and to keep away from the other place, has been believed, and in a way legitimately too, to be the main object of religion. Here again, let me draw your attention to the very words which the Qur-án has chosen to convey the ideas of Heaven and Hell.

"Jannat" is the word used in the Qur-án for heaven, and most eloquently it connotes the Qur-ánic conception of Heaven. On one side it means something hidden and concealed from the naked eye; while the other meaning of "Jannat" is luxuriant and rank growth. May I draw attention to every clod of clay that you have come across to-day on your way to this place? It is dark and without any attraction for you, but Nature has endowed it with something very beautiful. Furrow it out; bring these clods of clay under some process of cultivation, and this dirty earth is presently transformed into a beautiful garden.

[1] "Table Talk" by the author.

This phenomen you observe in your every day experience; everything that comes in your way contains something hidden in it, which when evolved, makes it valuable. So everything in Nature becomes Heaven and Hell. Things are in the condition of Hell if their inherent faculties become stunted and developed; but they become Heaven when these qualities receive full fructification.

Man's mind is a microcosm — a miniature of the whole universe. It is of goodliest fibre, possesses the highest capabilities, as the Qur-án says, and can make unlimited progress. Think of the numberless channels of human energy and God knows what inexhaustible stores we still possess, which remain yet to be worked out. One who has attained perfect self-realization, has created his own Heaven; and one who has stunted his faculties is condemned to that fire of God which will come out of the human heart itself (*The Qur-án*). Do not you experience some sort of heart-burning when you see a fellowman, who began his life with you, with equal opportunities with yourself, become successful by working out his faculties, while you remain on the shelf, simply because you did not make proper use of your time and opportunity? Such a heart-burning in your present life may give you a very hazy idea of one of the several aspects of Hell set forth in the Qur-án. I am not concerned here with what other religions say about Heaven and Hell. There may be a lake of fire with

burning brimstone in it, and with gnashing of teeth, and there may not. Similarly something is said of Heaven in Christian theology. Those who care to ride clouds with golden crowns on their heads while singing hymns to God, day and night, may please themselves with such an idea of Heaven; but I do not care for such a stationary life; I must have something to develop, some sort of elevation; everything around me is on the move to progress; destruction in Nature is only a name for change of form; nay, destruction in some cases means a new life, a new course of progress.

Man being the best product of Nature, and the finest handiwork of God, cannot do other than progress. These seventy or eighty years of life are too short for our full development. Innumerable faculties remain undeveloped in many of us when we die; if in hundreds they receive their sublimation, in millions they remain dormant when death comes; and if everything in every atom comes to actuality, what about those things in man, that remain hidden in him in this life, which, under Islamic teaching, is only a life of preparation, while the time of fruition begins on the other side of the grave? If I have put my faculties into working order, my death simply means an entrance into a life of further progress, — and this is "Jannat" (Heaven) of the Qur-án.

PRESENT LIFE: LIFE OF PREPARATION: THE EARTH AND THE HUMAN HEART. You make your heaven and hell your-

self. Your heart supplies you with the bed-rock for further construction. Just as you break the earth, and till the ground, and prepare the land, and then a small thing like a seed, with the help of water from above, enables the earth to pour its innumerable and inestimable treasures before you — and we have not as yet been able to exhaust its resources — even so the same earth, in miniature, you have got again in its most evolved form, in the shape of your own heart, in your body.

It contains, in extract, every ingredient of the earth. "Verily We have created man as an extract from the earth" (*The Qur-án*). The earth, with all its ingredients, going through various processes of refinement, has assumed the shape of the human heart, and retains all its original forces on a sublimated scale; and, as in the case of the earth, we have been unable to exhaust its resources. As the earth produces beautiful things physical in nature, the human heart creates things moral and spiritual. Both need water from heaven to bring their forces into operation.

Matter in the earth needs rain in material form, and rain comes from the clouds; but the human heart is the repository of moral and spiritual things; the rain necessary for its fertility cannot assume physical shape. It must bear affinity to the matter it has to work upon. The animal heart gives birth to consciousness, which, in the human frame, needs the further refinement of the emotions and passions. These are to be con-

verted into morality, that is, ethics and philosophy; morality again, in its turn, is to be evolved into spirituality. Now, such a sublimation of animal emotions on the plane of the human heart could not, of course, be effected by material rain from the clouds. But it needed rain — something in a form of which it would be conscious, something in definite shape; something which would have to do more with mentality than with our physical nature. The rain did come, and it came in the suitable form. It took the form of words revealed from the lips of God. It helped man to dig the soil of his own heart, and produced a healthy crop. The Qur-án opens this truth to us in the following words: "Know that Allah gives life to the earth after death; indeed. We have made the communications clear to you that you may understand" (chap. lvii, ver. 17).

Is it now difficult for you to appreciate the teachings of the Qur-án as to the real object of religion, and revelation from God? The Book of Islam teaches us that we have been given the highest capabilities, and that the progress in store for us knows no bounds (chap. xcv). We have to work out our resources and bring them to a certain stage of development in this our sojourn on the earth, and then to be translated to higher regions for further growth; we cannot proceed an inch further in our journey beyond the grave, unless and until we have attained that certain amount of perfection that is to be attained in this life. In other words, we have to achieve

certain qualifications before we enter into the kingdom of heaven for further progress. If we lack the required qualifications, or have corrupted or stunted the progressive nature given to us at our birth here, this diseased condition of soul at our death, will necessitate purification for a fresh start. We have to attain some kind of perfection before leaving this earthly frame; but if we fail to do it when the soul leaves the body, we shall need some time and place when and where to make up our short-comings, and prepare ourselves for the heavenly life.

MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF HELL. Hell, as the Qur-án teaches, comes to provide us with the place needed. We do not believe in the eternity of the Hell. The Muslim Hell, more or less, is of a purgatorial, and consequently of a temporary, nature. It helps us to cleanse the soul from all the blemishes that disqualify it from soaring higher and higher into regions Divine. If a healthy physique is needed for a perfect growth on this earth, a healthy soul is essential for spiritual uplifting in the Ethereal Kingdom. If the doors of hospitals and infirmaries have been opened by the benevolence of man to treat us physically, and remove defects of the body, Hell, under divine policy, opens its arms to receive every soul leaving the earth in a diseased condition, for the necessary cure. It purges it of all its evils, and enables it to enter into the land of happiness and health. It is not the wrath, but the merciful providence of God which creates

Hell. Just like a mother who, out of the affection of her heart, brings her baby under a surgical operation in order to relieve him of a diseased organ, you will find the Hell not less affectionate in restoring you to the spiritual health which you have lost in this world, through your folly and wickedness. Like a kind mother, Hell has also got able surgeons at her disposal in the persons of "angels of Hell", who will bring your moral ulcers and spiritual gangrenes under their sharp knife; the operation must cause excruciating pain and unbearable agonies with "crying and gnashing of teeth"; you will have to take bitter and burning purgatives, but all this comes from the affection of the mother — Hell — into whose arms you have been given for the restoration of your health. It is to this effect that the Book of God says the following: "Wa ummuhoo háwayah" — and the Hell is his mother.

## CHAPTER IV.

# THEOSOPHY, SPIRITUALISM AND ISLAM.

THE aims of Theosophy are, in essence, noble aims, and may be thus stated:

First, to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

Secondly, to promote the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

Thirdly, to investigate the unexplained laws of Nature, and the powers latent in man.

So far, Spiritualism and Theosophy would seem to work on identical lines, though some of the adherents of the former have, of late, been taken up overmuch with the phenomenal aspects of the movement.

Like Spiritualism, Theosophy concerns itself with the question of Life after Death; the only difference (and this is not true of every Spiritualist) being in the belief of Theosophy in the doctrine of Reincarnation — which, partaking somewhat of retrogression, is abhorrent to the Spiritualist.

In all other salient and distinctive features, the two cults are as one. The aims of Theosophy,

as I have stated them, are sufficiently comprehensive to include certain of those essentials which go to the making of Religion — that is, Religion worthy of the name; but if Religion be a Divine institution, claiming Divine inspiration for its origin, it seems a little strange that Almighty God should have waited till the beginning of 1875 (when the Theosophical Society was founded at New York) before announcing His Ultimate Will to mankind.

If Religion can be conceived of as a man-made commodity, then obviously it is a thing susceptible of continual improvement, innovation and revision; and Theosophy or Spiritualism can be accepted quite reasonably, as the latest development of human ideas applied to the improvement of their religious expression.

If, on the other hand, Theosophy, like Islam, admitting the origin of every religion to be from God, ascribes also the divergent elements that make for religious discord, to human interpolation and human interference, is it not possible that Theosophy also has been established as the outcome of a Divine Revelation? To deny such a probability were an insult to the Divine Providence — more especially if it be the case (as many earnestly maintain) that the message of Theosophy (as also that of Spiritualism) contains a number of elements absolutely essential to the happy growth of society, but which are not evident in any extant religion.

Is it that the mind of man is quick to realize

a necessity which the Divine Mind, in the preoccupation of Its All-Wisdom, seems to have overlooked?

There are two alternatives, and only two.

If Religion be a human product, then Theosophy is the God-sent message to supply what must inevitably be lacking; but if Religion is itself Divine Providence — what need ye of any further witness? Everything that is requisite and necessary for human progress is to be found in religion — if man will but set himself to find it.

There was a time in the world's history when the races of men dwelt apart, because they were cut off from one another by natural or artificial barriers, mountains, seas or deserts; with no means of crossing them, and perhaps, small desire to do so.

Hence grew up idiosyncracies and nationalities — men became foreign to each other — custom, thought and religion were bounded, like the lands wherein they flourished, by the mountain, the desert or the sea.

Religion can be given in different forms to different nationalities — many plants from the one root; but on the emergence of the world from its period of isolation and partition, when the era of cosmopolitanism began, and the masses of mankind, hitherto segregated, came into contact with each other, there was the universal religion — the common foundation of all still continuing but buried beneath the ever increasing litter of human comment and speculation.

If God has seen fit, in ages past, to come to the aid of His people by a new Revelation (and there is no extant Faith of which this is not a cardinal principle), shall He remain dumb, in the new crisis of doubt and confusion; and leave man alone, to rely on his own limited faculties to stumble and blunder on towards a possibly imaginary light? If this position be logically sound, then Islam is that new Revelation which the Highest has vouchsafed to His people.

All the high purposes of Theosophy and Spiritualism — those distinctive claims or privileges which cause them to stand out alone among the world's beliefs, that set them apart and away from the common-places of dogma and tradition — are contained and set forth in the religion preached by Muhammad in Arabia thirteen hundeed years ago — all these things, and one other, in which, both Theosophy and Spiritualism are lacking. For Islam shows man the way whereby these high purposes may be achieved.

It lays down for us a code of life, through which the ideals of Theosophy and Spiritualism become reality.

With others, the dream of a Universal Brotherhood is still a dream; Islam has made it a fact. With others, to investigate the latent powers in man, is to set sail over an uncharted sea towards a shore whereof the very existence is uncertain; but the Prophet of Islam has revealed them all to the world — and how they are to be worked out — has shown us in a flash the undiscovered

bourne, its peaks and promontories, and the paths that lead thereto; and generations of the learned and devout among Muslims, bear witness to this truth.

If Theosophy knows no dogma, then it has no choice but to follow in the footsteps of Islam. Page after page of the Qur-án appeals to human reason, the observation of the human reason, the experiences of human reason, in order that the truth of its message may be brought home to the reader — to human reason.

Nothing inconsistent with reason — nothing illogical — finds its place in that Book — and that is why sects and heresies are unknown in Islam; as well as the spirit of fraternal venom and malignity engendered thereby. Schools of thought there are, differing, without rancour, on points of academic interest — but the academic is never permitted to submerge the actual. The exercise of personal judgment — the forming of individual opinions, has always been encouraged in Islam. "The difference of opinion in my following", says the noble Prophet, "is a blessing"; yet this difference of opinion has never caused the so-called "sects" of Islam to disagree in the fundamental teachings of their religion — in the things of faith, morality or law.

But, for all its broad-mindedness, there is one point on which Islam finds it impossible to see eye to eye with Theosophy, either on rational or practical grounds, and this point is summed up in the following passage taken from the writings of Mrs. Annie Besant:

"No personal religious opinions are asked upon his joining; nor is interference with them permitted; but everyone is required to show to the religion of his fellow-members the same respect that he claims for his own.

The Society excludes no man on the ground that he does not believe in Theosophy. A man may deny everyone of its teachings — save only that of Human Brotherhood — and yet claim his place, as of right, within its ranks."

But how can a man be a Theosophist without believing in the teachings of Theosophy; and how can Human Brotherhood be established to any purpose unless there be general community of thought and ideals among its advocates? Human Brotherhood — the Universal Brotherhood cannot exist where distinction of race or creed or colour are encouraged; yet such distinctions are cherished by millions as an integral part of their faith.

Does not the religion of Brahminism — from which indeed is derived the same essentials of Theosophy — inculcate, in the most emphatic manner, the necessary distinction of race and sex — of caste and colour?

You invite a Brahmin to become a member of your Society; you assure him that such a course involves no interference with his religious opinion and yet one of the vital articles of his belief is wiped out the moment he becomes a Theosophist. He cannot be a Brahmin of the high type, if he fails to observe the rigid rules of Caste. He cannot sit at the same table with

Shudra — nor even come in contact — even by the slightest touch — with the body or raiment of Shudra; his religion would forbid it. How, then, can he, without being false to his faith, become a Theosophist?

Again, Theosophy proposes to have no concern at all with the doctrinal basis of any religion — yet the doctrine of Reincarnation is its own chief corner-stone.

The objects which Theosophy has in common with all Religion, are two; to develop the latent powers of mankind and to seek for and obtain the knowledge necessary thereto.

Reincarnation is the only course proposed by Theosophy, whereby these objects may be attained; and, how, then, can a Muslim turn Theosophist when the Qur-án lays down, in the clearest terms, that there is no return to this planet for the spirit once released by death.

I have met many Muslims in Madras, who have joined the Theosophical Society — but they are Muslims no longer seeing that now they are firm believers in the reincarnation of the soul. Has there been no interference with their religious opinions?

It will be urged that Theosophy does not impose any teaching on its adherents — but facts are facts and the result is precisely the same as that which would have come about if Theosophy had made it an indispensable condition.

It is the same with Christians who have become Theosophists.

Are we, then, to understand that this professed indifference of Theosophy to the religious convictions of its adherents is, in effect, little more than camouflage?

Either it has no distinctive features of its own at all — in which case it is not worth joining; or it has such features — but they clash with those of other religions.

One noble end Theosophy and Spiritualism have endeavoured to achieve — noble, if perhaps a trifle vague; that is to remove exclusive narrow-mindedness — to broaden man's mind so as to enable him to perceive and appreciate the beauties that may be in other minds — to open the eyes of the West to a real religion that has something better than dogma to teach.

Yet, here as elsewhere, it would almost seem that positive achievement must still be in inverse proportion to the magnitude of the thing proposed.

Society in the West, and indeed, I may say, everywhere, where the old forms of Religion obtain, has long been dissatisfied with things as they are. The world has become too small, these days, for assured self-satisfaction. Every thinking man has begun to learn that there is something — possibly something better — to be got from the teaching of others.

There can be no progress without some sort of Catholicity — or Universalism. Ritual and dogma have begun to appear formal and lifeless things — unessential parts of a true Religion. Is there anything then, at all, in the old religion

of the West, that has part or lot with the new and broader ideals which Theosophy seeks to pursue?

At that period of the last century when this new voice first became audible, very little was known of Islam in the Western world — and what was known, distorted and obscured by monstrous shadows of myth and prejudice, was generally misconstrued, and almost universally misunderstood.

Yet Islam held the secret for which the awakening world sought so eagerly, but so blindly.

But Islam had been represented as a hideous thing — a sinister menacing figure blended of barbarism and lust — a form from which it was unthinkable that any good should come. All the forces of venom, slander, backbiting and all uncharitableness which though utterly foreign to the teachings of Jesus, had, nevertheless, by slow degrees, become the Christianity of the Middle Ages, surviving on into the 19th century — had been launched at the head of Islam.

This being the case, when towards the close of that century the minds of men groped blindly for the truth — there was no guide until Theosophy arose and strove to lead the way — Theosophy, with Spiritualism in her train; and in my own humble estimation it is Spiritualism that, representing a truer evolution of religious thought, is the surer guide of the two.

Islam provides for everything that man may need and has laid down a course for every kind

of human progress. It comprehends within itself the essentials both of Theosophy and Spiritualism, excepting only the doctrine of the reincarnation of the soul.

Where then was the necessity for the new religious system?

I have said before, and I say it again, that I am quite unable to understand, why if the old religion could not provide the sustenance which the developed mind of modern man craves and fails to find, God Himself did not intervene, as He had done again and again in the past?

Perhaps it was unnecessary for Him to do so — but if religion is a Divine Institution and a portion of the infinite Providence and loving care of the Almighty — then religion has been given us by God to suffice for the needs of humanity.

It is this sufficiency that is claimed by the Qur-án.

The Muslim believes in life after death, in the life beyond the grave; and believing in that life his belief makes it a real vehicle for further progress.

The spirit which, in the beginning of things, emanated from the Divine Essence and assumed a grosser raiment for its journey to the appointed goal, comes nearest to its original form, in the human shape wherein it first receives consciousness.

It has made its first appearance on the emotional plane, but it is still dimmed by the mists of earth. It must soar higher and higher yet, until it rises

clear, purged of all promptings and cravings that have their root in the animal.

Then will be opened to it a door to still further progress, and all the latent faculties which were reposed in it on the day that it came from the Creator, will stand on the threshold of Full Fruition.

Our life on earth is but a life of preparation. So the Prophet has said. It is for us the life of purification — the life of disentanglement — of separating the Divine Essence that is in us, from the matters of earth.

If, then, we leave the world with the necessary qualifications, we enter straightway, those realms of Divinity wherein there will be no limit to our progress; but if we leave the world otherwise — polluted or tainted with the things of the flesh — we must undergo that course of purification which, in Muslim theology, is called Hell.

We have been made after the image of God — we possess, potentially, all the attributes of God; in a certain degree; we are capable of reproducing, in ourselves, the morality of God; some of us have been nearer the goal, some less near, but for everyone of us the one field of true and ultimate self-expression is the life beyond the grave. The subject is one that demands the fullest discussion, and I propose to treat of it later in a separate volume — but I may content myself for the moment with putting the matter in this way. If Islam does, as a fact, contain the spiritual sustenance which man's soul requires on earth; and if Islam

does, as a fact, ascribe its origin to Divine inspiration (which claim is, as I understand, not disputed either by Theosophy or Spiritualism) — then God has in His providence, already provided all that the mind of man is now seeking to acquire by the aid of Theosophy and Spiritualism — which indeed do no more than propose or indicate the ideals, to the realization of which Islam points the way.

And here I should like to say a word on the question of universal Brotherhood which is given special prominence in the teaching of Theosophy and of Spiritualism.

It would seem that a spirit of Universal Brotherhood is a more crying and instant need in human society, as it exists to-day, than the more remote ideal of working out and developing the capacities latent in man; that these latter are matters of more or less individual concern, while the ultimate well-being of human society must depend upon the establishment of the principle of the Universal Brootherhood of Man; which alone, working as it is only possible for it to work, that is to say, by means of sympathy and fellow-feeling, can put an end to the world misery which distinctions of race and colour, and a patriotism falsely conceived, have brought forth.

This is the line taken by Theosophy and Spiritualism, and if they have no definite method, plan or scheme by which it is proposed that their remote ideal should be attempted, — and I know that they have none, — and if it is indeed hardly

to be expected that the mind of man should, in the twinkling of an eye, become sufficiently universal to feel for the sorrows of strangers as keenly as for those of his own kind—they can, if they will, learn from Islam.

God, Who is the Universal Father, in Whose Eye all His children are equally entitled to His blessings, makes no distinction between man and man, and alone can give us the solution of the problem.

It will not be found in Theosophy, nor yet in Spiritualism; for these are of man — man-made and man-devised.

## CHAPTER V.

# UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

MUSLIM brotherhood is a reality; and Islam is the only religion in the world which has succeeded in uniting its adherents in real fraternity. It is not unity of faith which has accomplished this welding of conflicting elements into one whole: but it is the view taken by Islam of humanity, which has wrought the wonder. I call it a wonder because unity in faith has, in other religions, failed conspicuously to secure brotherly unity among the various sects of the same religion. Christianity is a case in point.

Christianity was a real brotherhood in the beginning when the teaching of the Master was fresh. The hardships and persecutions too, which were the lot of the early Christians, tended to the same desirable result, but no sooner did the old pagan ideas become engrafted on the purity of the new faith, and the political ambitions of Constantine induce him to make of Christianity a new State religion, than the healthy effects of the Master's teaching began to vanish away. The church of Jesus became split into sections and sub-sections, and the process of division and subdivision has continued to this day, and is continuing. Can there be any unity or community of

ideas under conditions such as these? And can there be any remaining hope for any real brotherhood in Christendom? Mediaeval history gives no encouragement to the idea, and the present day church is not improving matters. Brotherhood means unity of ideas, and unity of ideas cannot be secured under any religion unless the teachings of that religion — whatever be their worth — remain free from corruption. If the teaching of a religion remains from age to age unaltered and, at the same time, allows no room for difference of opinion, there is no possibility of true fraternity. Islam has been successful in establishing brotherhood by reason of the purity of its teachings, together with the full latitude it allows to personal judgment and individual opinion—a latitude, be it noted, which is fully exercised by Muslims.

The fundamental principles of Islam are one and the same everywhere. While in any other religion, adherence to one sect of it means expulsion from the fold of the faithful, in the opinion of all the other sects, in Islam, allegiance to any one school of thought — there being no sects in Islam — does not shut a person off from the rest of the Muslim world. That measure of brotherhood which Theosophy has sought to secure, by asserting that it does not interfere with the religious views of its members, Islam has achieved by giving unity of ideas in matters of religion to all its followers. Islam achieves by affirmation what Theosophy seeks to accomplish by negation.

In these circumstances, am I not justified in concluding that Islam can not only succeed in establishing brotherhood within its own fold, but can also go further and teach truths broad enough to bring the whole of human society into one brotherhood? The Qur-án opens with the adoration of Allah, Who is not a tribal Deity, but Rabb-ul-Aalamin, the Creator, Maintainer and Nourisher of all the worlds, and of all the races and sects of humanity, and a Muslim in his daily prayers, which he says five times a day, has to adore the same Universal God. Can a worshipper of the God of all nations look down upon other nationalities with any idea of superiority over them, especially when the real conception of the worship of God in Islam is the service of his creatures? The best of men, in the words of the Holy Prophet, is he who is best to his fellow beings. The ideal of worship is simply put in the following words of the Qur-án: — "Say O Muhammad to the people, my prayers and my sacrifices and my death are to further the cause of God, the Creator and Nourisher of all the worlds". If this is to be the object of a Muslim's life, how can he cherish any other than brotherly feeling towards every unit of humanity? He would be untrue to his own God if he did not feel as a brother towards all mankind. The earth, no doubt, has been peopled with a great diversity of races, but the Qur-án calls them members of one family, and the whole human race one people.

If you treat, as a Muslim is bound to do, a member of the most backward race as a member of your own family, would not Universal Brotherood be already on a fair way to be established? Yet another great factor in the disintegration of human society is the diversity of religious ideas. Unless you accept the origin of every religion from the Divine Source, you cannot achieve unity of purpose in establishing Universal Brotherhood. What religion, other than Islam, has taught and maintained these healthy principles! We read in the following: —

"(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed" (chap. xi, ver. 213).

"O people be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two many men and women" (chap. iv, ver. 1).

"Say We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was revealed to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit" (chap. ii, ver. 136).

The moment we accept the teachers of other religions as our own teachers and guides, and

make no distinctions between prophet and prophet, more than half of the trouble which separates brother from brother is over, as I remarked before.

Then come the difference in tenets and doctrines which are mutually exclusive in their nature. Theosophy sees the difficulty, but the remedy it proposes — non-interference with the opinion of others —, is no remedy at all. It is against human nature to maintain the attitude of non-interference. It is an impediment to human progress. Thinking power is a great gift of God to humanity; but how are we to exercise this gift if we are bound to maintain a policy of non-interference? We must exchange our ideas with each other. It is the lever of all development in human thought.. If agreement in ideas brings forth unification — which means true fraternity, our attempts to secure such agreement must involve entering into controversy with others on the point of our differences.

Go to any Theosophical meeting and the moment you strike a note differing from the received notions of Theosophy, it leads to questions. Theosophists are human beings after all, like the rest of us, and cannot resist the temptation of questioning. Undoubtedly a controversial spirit is not in some respects a healthy one. It may well lead to disintegration. So here we have the great problem — on one side, progress of thought stands in urgent need of the exchange of ideas and the discussion of differences; on the other hand, controversies sow the seed of disaffection and disunion, and are detrimental to brotherhood.

The solution of the difficulty comes from Islam. The Holy Prophet declares difference of opinion to be a blessing. But to guard against the baneful effect of controversy, the Qur-án lays down the following golden rule: —

> "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way" (chap. 16, ver. 125).

Religious controversy in Islam thus becomes a friendly exchange of ideas — no infliction of opinion on others, no forcing of views, no persuasion, and no scurrilous attacks on others' principles, but plain statements of our views in courteous words.

What hope can there be of brotherly relations among the various religions of mankind, if, in the spirit of the Crusades we go into the world to demolish the places of worship of others? Islam shows the disastrous effect of such a spirit. "And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty" (chap. xxii, ver. 40).

Under these Qur-ánic injunctions, a Muslim is bound to defend the temple of another religion and keep it in its integrity. Can he fail then,

to secure the love and respect of non-Muslims, if he do this good turn to his fellows?

These injunctions did not remain merely ideals with Muslims, they became practical realities. India was the home of idolatry at the advent of Islam. It abounded in pagodas, shrines and temples, dedicated to thousands of deities of the Puranic age; and yet those who were commanded by God to purify His earth from the abominations of idolatry could not see their way to do so, as it was done in certain houses of worship in India.

Muslims ruled India for about one thousand years, and to-day those shrines are still in existence. It gives the lie to much that we find in alleged "history" written by certain Anglo-Indian officials for political ends.

The respect shown by the Muslim to the Hindu house of worship won the respect and love of the Hindu.

Hindus and Muslims dwelt as brothers in India before the British rule, but the misguided policy of "divide and rule" adopted by the British officials, not only began to widen the gulf between the children of the soil, but has in the long run proved detrimental to the British cause itself, has opened the eyes of the country to the folly of the scheme, and cast reflections on the bona-fides of England — nevertheless the present apathy existing between Hindus and Muslims has more to do with these political blunders than any other cause. The India of only one century ago presents a good illustration of these brotherly feelings which can be created

between the followers of different religions, by acting on the principle of mutual respect.

I have purposely dealt with this aspect of the question. Religion has been more a cause of disintegration than of unification in the world; wherefore Theosophy has been moved to adopt the principle of non-interference, which, as I have said before, is unnatural. Islam has shown the right way, which, if pursued, will establish fraternal relations among followers of different religions, without encroaching upon their respective faiths. Prejudice of race, colour and descent is another strong factor which militates against the bringing of the various peoples of the world into one family.

Theosophy and spiritualism, no doubt, pay no regard to race and colour. The democratic spirit of the time is also perhaps, bringing down the prestige of descent in the popular eye; and yet all this cannot give that influence to our feelings which one word in the Book of God would produce, in the mind of a person who accepts it as such.

If race, colour and descent carry no weight in the eye of a Muslim, it is because he has been so ordered by his God, in the following words of the Qur-án:

"O you men surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families, that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware" (chap. xlix ver. 13).

Racial prejudices and the breach of friendly relations between nation and nation, often induce us to do injusice to others. Patriotism has done more wrong to the sweet relations which might otherwise exist between the various races of the world, than anything.

That strong sense of justice, the boast of the Englishman, suffers very much when he has to do justice between a fellow-countryman and a person of another nationality. His conception of justice undergoes a change, when the interest of his own nation is at stake; but this trait is not peculiar to English people; other nations show the same weakness.

Can Theosophy or Spiritualism kill these propensities in human nature, which are a great enemy to Universal Brotherhood, by mere homilies and sermons unsupported by any Word of God. Man-made laws and rules can be easily set at nought, seeing that they cannot carry the same weight in the estimation of man, as the teaching he accepts as coming from God.

The God of Islam saw this human weakness and pointed it out in the following words of the Qur-án:

> "Let not hatred of a people — because they hindered you from the sacred mosque — incite you to exceed the limits, and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression". (chap. v, ver. 2).

I have mentioned here only some of the salient

teachings of the Qur-án, which are essential in creating and maintaining a brotherly spirit in mankind. The book abounds in such precepts and principles, too numerous to be set down here, but I cannot conclude the subject without laying stress on the Muslim belief in the unity of God, which belief leads to another belief — that of the equality between man and man.

Our belief in the unity of God means not only that all our adoration and worship ascend only to one God, and that we should not associate any other object with Him, but it has a deeper meaning still. After God, a Muslim has to classify every other thing into two categories. First, those who are equal to him, and secondly those who are subordinate. Under the first class come all members of humanity, and under the second the rest of created things. One who in his practice and dealing cannot observe these two categories, is weak in his faith in the one-ness of God.

Has not the Prophet been ordained by God Himself to emphasize the equality between man and man, when speaking of the unity of God?

> "Say. I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your God is one God" (chap. xviii, ver. 110).

The verse clearly shows that a man cannot really believe in the unity of God unless he believes in the equality of man. If Muhammad in the eye of a Muslim is only like unto him as a man, who else can in his judgment, claim superiority? Without the cultivation of such a

spirit, Universal Brotherhood is only an ideal, and not a practicable reality.

The idea of the equality of man cannot be maintained, if equality in birth is not admitted. I have already quoted the Qur-ánic verses which declare descent to be a matter of accident. The Holy Prophet made a very eloquent comment on it, when he said that every child, no matter where it is born, is a Muslim.

Islam means, as the Prophet says, respect for God and kindness to humanity. Every child possesses these qualities at his birth, declares Muhammad. If equality in birth is the lever of brotherhood, does not the noble Prophet assign this lever to every child of man? If every one is a Muslim by birth, he is my brother, even if he be born of a non-Muslim house. If the worst came to the worst I would receive him as a prodigal son of my own father, and not as an alien child. Such equality in birth cannot exist under the theory of the reincarnation of the soul, where lowliness in rank at birth is ascribed to some wrong done in the previous incarnation. This theory has done more harm to the establishment of universal brotherhood than any other influence or teaching known to humanity. Go to the land of the Brahmins, which is its birthplace, and then you will be able to appreciate the full force of my remarks.

The iron rules of caste and class in India have made millions of people "un-touchable" — the very touch of whom will pollute a Brahmin.

The Brahmin books give a long list of hideous sins, which when committed lead to the sinner's birth among the "un-touchable". Can any brotherly feeling exist between the members of this class and other men? Leave aside illicit connections between the members of the low and the high classes, wedlock between a Brahmin woman and an "un-touchable", condemns the husband to be born again, in his next incarnation, as a Chandal, the worst type of "un-touchable". No matrimonial alliance between a Brahmin woman and a member of other lower classes is permissible. In some cases, such a connection is rejected as nothing short of an incestuous relation. If most of the "un-touchables" — and there are millions in India — are indeed the people who committed the above mentioned wrongs, are not the Brahmins justified in having nothing to do with them?

Modern education has elevated the human mind, but the force of the laws of caste is so strong that a Shudra — the lowest caste in India — by birth, who holds a very high post in India and is a graduate of Cambridge University, had to get his intended wife, who was a Brahmin woman, converted to Sikhism before he could marry her.

These class and caste rules in India have kept millions of people in degradation and at the lowest rung of the ladder of civilization. But if you go to the root of the matter you will find that the whole monster tree of mischief springs from the theory of the reincarnation of souls.

Religious institutions produce a more lasting effect than anything else. The doors of the house of God should remain open to every person; and the Church should accord an equal welcome to all its worshippers. Neither with Christians nor Hindus is this so. No religious movement, either of God or man, has produced apter occasions and more practical opportunities for sowing the spirit of brotherhood effectually and in all sincerity, than has Islam; and nowhere is this so publicly shown as in the Mosque, and at Mecca, in the time of pilgrimage.

## CHAPTER VI.

# RE-INCARNATION OF SOULS.

THIS theory which plays a great part in Hindu philosophy has also been accepted in Theosophy as one of its verities. We may not accept it, but we cannot cavil at the logic of it; more especially as it has received its genesis from the same causes which, in Muslim theology, brought Hell into existence. If life on earth is a life of preparation in which we have to attain certain qualifications essential for our entry into regions Divine—"Braham loka" in the words of Krishna; if certain conditions, exclusively belonging to the earth, are necessary for such preparation, will it not be necessary, so would argue a Hindu divine, for us to return to earthly life again, if we have left it without acquiring the necessary perfection? We had to attain certain experiences not available in the next world; we left this world without doing so, and consequently we do need to come back to it again. The logic is not bad and the reasoning is quite plausible; but they do not coincide with what I find in the course of evolution observable in the universe.

From ethereal specks and electronic collocations up to the human form, all manifestations and specializations of nature are constantly on

the move to progress. They do not retrogress, nor do they retrace a single step that has once been taken on the path of progress. Things pass from region to region, and are translated from one state of being to another — sometimes perfect in condition, sometimes imperfect — in the course of progress; but they are never permitted to return to the state of being they have left, to make up a deficiency.

If a thing has passed a stage of growth (or state of being) before it has been able to reach that perfection which it ought to have attained while in that stage of growth (or state of being), then new means, such as may be necessary for the rectification of the defect, are straightway forthcoming in the new region (stage of growth or state of being) to which it has been translated. For example: — a seed may leave a tree in defective condition. It need not go back into the trunk of the tree it came from, to make up its deficiencies; you have only to plant it in a land with better climate, and to manure it properly, and this same, defective seed will sprout into a healthy trree, far more fruitful perhaps than the mother tree; and what is true in the vegetable kingdom is true also in other kingdoms. A child before its birth has to receive a certain amount of growth in the embryonic state, but if he is born with some physical defects he need not, and does not, go back into the mother's womb for the fault to be remedied. Surgical aid provides the cure — and though such

methods of rectification are, without doubt, ultra-natural and involve pain, yet they are the only means for amendment. And if a child, born with some physical infirmity, has never been permitted to retrace his footsteps to the womb for the purpose of having that infirmity removed, why should a person who has finished his course of earthly life — whatever the condition in which he passed from it may have been — ever come to this place again?

If therefore, this rule be universal in Nature, that that which has failed to attain to the requisite standard of perfection in one state of being is passed into the state of being next highest, there to have its deficiencies supplied and its deformities corrected; and if such system be the more expedient and the more conducive to rapidity of real progress; then I fail to find any reason, cogent or otherwise, for subscribing to the theory of the transmigration of the soul.

Moreover, this same phenomenon that I have described, is observable in every stage through which matter has to pass before assuming human shape. The food we assimilate every day will eventually take the form of genital sperma, which will presently convert itself into the human shape of a child. The food has to pass through many stages before it reaches that stage. Things not properly cooked are sometimes taken in; they cause pains in the stomach, but the trouble is removed by treatment. The food is not sent back from the stomach to the kitchen to be cooked again.

We take medicine to help the digestion, and enable the food to pass through the regions of the blood. Sometimes when, whether from some defect of the stomach or through the function of a diseased liver we produce poor blood, we seek a remedy in medicine, but no drop of that poor blood is allowed to return to the liver or stomach for the purpose of rectification; and the reason is simply this — that the means and circumstances necessary for blood formation exist in the stomach and liver only — not in the heart and the arteries of the blood. Though poor blood may germinate unhealthy seed, yet new means are ever at hand by which it may be restored to its proper conditions. The sperma never returns, never transmigrates, to the blood-regions, to make good defects in its growth.

If, therefore, what we have thus observed in the invariable processes of Nature can be considered to give us a reasonable basis for our belief in the matters of which I have been speaking, I am constrained to reject the theory of the transmigration of the soul, and accept the theory of Hell as propounded in the Qur-án.

THEORY OF KARMA. Closely allied to the "Transmigration of the Soul" is the doctrine of Karma (actions). The two are one and the same theory, representing different aspects of the same doctrine; the one is substantive, the other adjective. The doctrine of Karma takes for its genesis the diversity of circumstances in which

people find themselves at their birth, from causes beyond their control.

If some are born in affluence, poverty and indigence attend the birth of others; some are born into the world with bodily defects, while others are blest with every bodily perfection; and this disparity, producing arbitrarily, as it does, comfort and discomfort, happiness and misery, does seem, if we are in no degree to be held responsible for it, a strange blot on the impartiality of Divine Providence.

The theory of Karma, in Hindu theology however, thus explains this seeming incongruity in the Divine dispensation. All that we receive at our birth in the form of hapiness or misery, and all the differences in social status that come into our being at birth, are, the Karmaist says, the outcome of our deeds in the life before the present. We take birth after birth to complete our course on this earth, and what we sow in the one, we must reap in the next.

No one would question the logic of the view that human society works on the Law of Actions. That actions must bear their fruit is the basic principle of every other religion, except Paulinism. Differences in social position, in many cases, undoubtedly arise from our own actions. We are the creators of our own comfort and misery. But if inferiority in the social scale in which every person finds himself at his birth in relation to another, must be ascribed to something wrong in one's bygone life, evil must needs, according

to this doctrine, become essential for the very working of human society. Difference of occupation and variety of employment are the motive power of the social machinery. We must serve each other in a wide variety of differing capacities, if adequate contribution is to be made to the common comfort; for differentiation means progress, and progress is born of diversity. If, however, difference of this kind is to be attributed to some past wrong, then comfort and progress must demand the existence of evil; men of one generation must commit sin so that, in the next, they may be re-born in the lower for the purpose of contributing to the happiness of the upper social stratum.

Superiority in A means inferiority in B, and the happiness of one person demands sacrifice from the other. And if sacrifice is essential for the proper working of society, evil and wrong which are supposed to be the cause of it under the aforesaid theory, become also essential for human progress. But a doctrine which makes evil a necessary item in the Divine Providence, is a gross insult to a Muslim's conception of God; and if, in this life, difference between man and man does in fact arise from past acts, how are we to explain that fundamental difference which must have existed at the very inception of our species? The process of procreation demands difference of sex. You may ascribe your present difference from another man to some cause in your previous life, but where were the

actions which caused difference of sex in the first pair, whence our species had its being? Difference in sonship and fatherhood is another difference which must exist even at the beginning of life. How are we to explain these differences when there was no previous life and consequently no previous action?

HAPPINESS A BENEFICENCE AND NOT A FRUIT OF ACTION. If all our present means of happiness are given to us as a reward for past actions, how are we to explain the happiness which comes to us providentially? Much of our happiness is derived from the varied manifestations of Nature, the sun, the moon, the earth and all that it provides; and the proportion of happiness that we acquire through our actions depends too, upon the working out, by us, of sources of Nature which were in existence long before man came on the earth. How can all this be the reward of our past actions? We cannot live without the pre-existence of millions of things in the universe; they all add to our happiness; and they all come as a beneficence of God, and not in reward of actions. Divine Providence, as exhibited in Nature, makes Divine Blessing, which is the main store of our happiness, a pre-existing thing; while the theory of Karma makes our actions to pre-exist the Divine Blessing, which is absurd on the face of it. If all our happiness has to arise from our actions, our happiness would be next to nothing. What comes out of our actions in the shape of happiness sinks into insignificance

when compared with what we get as Divine Blessings. The Qur-án lays special stress on this point, as well as on the difference of sex, which, it says, is to be found in everything coming out of the earth, when dealing with the theory of the transmigration of the soul, in the following words: —

"And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain, so they eat of it. And we make therein gardens of palms and grapevines, and We make springs to flow forth in it, that they may eat of the fruit thereof, *and their hands did not make it;* will they not be grateful? Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know".

THE THEORY WEAKENS SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. If our actions receive their birth and mould from our beliefs, we should not entertain any tenet or doctrine which tends to ruin our sense of responsibility, and to create in us moral or mental imbecility.

Fatalism, in the received sense of the word, was condemned by Islam for this very reason. Atonement is another condemnable belief. If another has to bear a burden, incentive for action, on my part, is lost. Similarly, we strive our hardest to alleviate our misery, because we believe that it is possible to alleviate it; but when we find that our trouble is absolutely without remedy, our zeal is gone, for what, in such a case, is the use of trying? Our misery, under

the theory of Karma, has come to us as the fruit of some past actions. It cannot be undone, and all our efforts to undo it will be in vain. I committed some wrong in a previous life, I must suffer for its consequences in the present life, and all my efforts to be free from it are simply to give the lie to that theory. If A is down with cholera which he has got on account of some past wrong, it hardly befits him to seek medical relief if he subscribes to the principle of Karma. The theory thus makes man a fatalist, and thereby impedes human progress.

Pain in this life, they say, is the penalty of past actions. If persecution and want of comfort may come within the category of pain, no progress in human society has, till now, been achieved without them. The world has seen its best benefactors in the persons of prophets, reformers and philosophers, but, unfortunately, they are the persons who have always been subjected to every kind of persecution. Similarly all scientific discoveries, to which we owe so much of our comfort and happiness, are the fruits of pain and hardship. Should we believe that all these great teachers and inventors were wicked men and sinners of the first water in the past life, because they have been for the most part persecuted people and leading the most painful lives?

No one gets happiness without some pain, and pain is the penalty of sin. Evil, therefore, becomes essential for enjoying happiness in the life to come. Such a theory can have but few

opportunities of giving birth to high character. If A receives some injury from B, it is, as a Hindu would say, to make up for some injury received by B from A in his previous existence. Thus, offence becomes a justification in the eye of a culprit, if he believes in Karma. I need not be thankful to my benefactors, because I receive from them what I gave to them in charity merely in the life past. The more I think upon the subject, keeping in view all the consequences to which such beliefs must logically lead, the more I am strengthened in my conviction that the theory in dispute is a belief most unfavourable to our moral growth.

The explanation given by our Holy Qur-án of the misery around us, and of the social differences which we have been discussing, appeals to me more, as it strengthens my sense of responsibility.

I am told in the Qur-án that I am not only the engineer of my own life, but that I am also responsible for the happiness and misery of my own descendants. Our interest in our children is, in most cases, stronger than our interest in our own selves. The welfare of the family often keeps its members away from such misdeeds as are sometimes unscrupulously committed by those who lead single lives.

If the consequences of every action I do be shared by my own children, I shall make my actions more steady and righteous. But if I alone have to reap what I sow, despair or temp-

tation may, sometimes, lead me to extremes. Belief therefore, that childern born with bodily defects, owe their misfortune to paternity, which sometimes may come to them from three or four generations back, will generally prove a more efficacious check to intemperate actions, than the belief that the childern are themselves responsible for their physical deficiencies. A person may not care much for the evil consequences of his actions if they are to be confined to him; but his care to see his family happy may reform him.

Here are two explanations of our present misery, one given by the theory of Karma and the other advanced by the Qur-án. No one can vouch for the truth of either on the strength of personal experience. We come out of oblivion and go into the same. No man, with a sensible head on his shoulders, can refer to what he has done in the previous life, though one is constrained to give a hearing to sundry silly stories, out of courtesy to certain "bluestockings", whose fancy has been attracted by the theory of which I have been speaking. No doubt one cannot speak with certainty on the subject; but of the two theories, that expounded by the Qur-án seems to me more wholesome in its effect on human character. The Hindu theory creates fatalism and weakens the sense of responsibility; and the most hideous part of it is, that it makes sin an essential for happiness and civilization.

These are not mere theories, but the actual realities of life. Go to those countries where the

theory of Karma is adhered to in practice and you will see that this is true. In Rangoon (Burma) for example, people ride in conveyances called rickshaws, which are drawn by men. It is a Buddhist country and the rickshaw-man is believed to be the re-incarnated soul of one, who, in a previous state, did certain wrong to the person who rides in the rickshaw. So far the theory is well enough; but the trouble arises when, as happens sometimes, the rider does not pay him his right fare; and feels quite justified, because the service rendered to him was only the just punishment awaiting the rickshaw-man. In a way, the passenger has been a blessing to the rickshaw-man, because he has given him an opportunity of atoning for the sin of his past life. I have taken this example at random, by way of illustration, but you will find throughout Burma and in China, how different disabilities, menial services and cases of oppression and hardship are explained by reference to the past. If oppressors are to be looked upon as agencies for removing the taint of past evil, would there not presently be an end to evil in the world?

Our interest in the coming generations does not ordinarily extend beyond the fourth, for the reason that some of us, if we are so far blessed as to behold some of our own descendants in our lifetime, have very little likelihood of beholding the fifth generation. Similarly, the consequence of our evil actions sometimes does not extend beyond the third or fourth generation, and this

helps to explain or define the responsibility of one person for the actions of another. The same truth is expressed in Exodus, chap. xx. ver. 12.

PLEASURE AND PAIN. The whole difficulty is one of misconception — or rather failure to conceive adequately of pain, or of pleasure, or of the real object and purpose of this our earthly pilgrimage; for what is pain to one is pleasure to another, and who is to decide whether prince or peasant sleeps the sounder o'nights, or whether the millionaire or the bricklayer has the juster perception of the end of life?

Diversities of inclination, of purpose, and of vision are implanted in each one of us, neither is there one common source of happiness for all men.

The eminent in philosophy or science will not set great store by the pleasures of the table, while for the gourmet the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, be it physical or metaphysical, is but vanity and vexation of spirit.

Learning for one, lucre for another, beauty for a third, to love and be loved for a fourth, — all are riches, all stand for happiness; and who shall decide which of them all is the real happiness?

The real happiness is to be found in perfect contentment — and it is never found, and the reason why it is never found is a different reason in each individual case. It is wrong to say that we differ from one another in the proportion of our happiness; for each one has his own pains and his own pleasures, and they are equally balanced.

We come here to perfect our consciousness — to evolve from our emotions, our sensibilities, and our passions, the higher concept of morality, and to sublimate the animal consciousness of our nature into the consciousness which is called Cosmic, which, in its turn, borders on the consciousness that is Divine.

Man may not attain thereto on this side of the grave. Rare cases there have been of rare personalities who have been enabled — though but faintly — to reproduce in their actions certain of the attributes of the Divine — but that is all.

If in this life we perfect our individual consciousness, eliminating the animal that was in us, so that in the hour of death no trace of it remains — then we have accomplished that which we were sent into the world to do.

We shall then be fit and qualified to make further progress in the coming stages of life.

If the achievement of individual consciousness is equally attainable by different persons under varying conditions or degrees — or I might almost term them grades — of comfort and happiness, then it is clear that such differences of grade are in themselves of no real consequence.

For one in whom the animal is still uppermost, riches are a real hindrance; while for one who has achieved individual consciousness they are just a real help for his further progress.

When we learn to respect the rights and susceptibilities of others, and to be true and just

in all our dealings, we are rising to the plane of individual consciousness, when we take what is due to us, and give to others what is due to them — when, in fact we render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

In this stage of consciousness, justice and equity, in perfection, are the distinguishing influences; but when we have schooled ourselves to feel, to strive, to fend for others just as we should for ourselves, at that moment our consciousness rises to something higher — family consciousness, national, international, human, and finally cosmic consciousness, the plane whereon, instinctively and without effort, we can render unto God the things that are God's.

If different factors, working in different persons, yet produce the same result, how can the diversity of fortune and condition, which is the lot of all mankind in this life, be the result of corresponding actions in a previous state?

The sublimation of our consciousness — the phrase is a cumbrous one, but it will serve to express the process which I have endeavoured to outline above — is the main purpose of our sojourn on earth; riches and poverty are both helpful and harmful to this end — helpful to one, harmful to another; a blessing to A a curse to B, and vice versa; consequently there can be no ground whatever for any theory which ascribes the prosperity and poverty of this life to the good and evil deeds of an existence that is past.

And the same is true of all other cases wherein

different persons have been variously endowed with the gifts of God.

In the ordinary way of life the organs of sense are the vehicles of knowledge — and any deficiency in one tends to strengthen the perceptive power of the others.

Blind persons are more imaginative than those who possess the organs of physical sight; and if imagination be a blessing, and an aid to the perfection of knowledge, and consciousness, then here is a blessing disguised as a curse.

It is not, however, through the exercise of the physical organs of sense that we obtain knowledge in the first instance; they do not bring us material — material which the mind, and the imagination working through the mind, transmutes into knowledge more or less complete.

A child will observe certain phenomena and be attracted by their appearance, but will rarely arrive at a conclusion even approximately right. An older person on the other hand, may not see the thing itself at all, but, on its being explained so him, he understands it, both its nature and its tignificance — and thus obtains his knowledge.

Here again, it may be said, this knowledge is obtained through an organ of the sense: — i. e. hearing, and this is of course, true; but the organ of hearing, if indeed it is to obtain knowledge, must have a mind, already stocked with knowledge, and with that offspring of knowledge properly applied — imagination; otherwise the said organ is of little use.

When, as sometimes happens, a hard problem arises, to which it is necessary that we devote our whole minds, to the exclusion of all other matters — we elect, if possible, to sit with closed, eyes, in a room apart, so that we may be distracted neither by seeing nor hearing; in other words, we deprive ourselves of the use of these senses in order that we may use those that remain to the fuller advantage; and the implication would seem to be that exercise of these external senses constitutes a serious distraction to the higher functions of imagination.

So it follows that if the main object of our earthly course is the attainment of knowledge, the loss or impairing of the organs of sense must be a blessing, if anything; a reward for past good deeds, rather than the punishment of old misdoing.

But, it will be asked, what about babies who die and leave the world just after they have entered it? Their earthly course consists but of a coming and a going — how will it be counted to them in the Divine Scheme of progress?

I think that when such a baby is born — and dies at birth, the first stage of its life pilgrimage is accomplished.

Now I have shown that human consciousness differs from the consciousnesses of animals in that it is progressive in character.

The development of animal consciousness is bounded by a certain fixed limit of growth, beyond

which it cannot go — while to the progress of human consciousness there is no limit.

If, indeed, mind has been evolved out of matter, and man's body is compounded of a like substance with that of animals — such difference of shape, manner and consciousness as are found to exist in the two organisms, must be ascribed to the differences in the combinations and proportions of the various ingredients. The matter is the same, but different combinations of its component elements, produce in one frame animal, in another, human consciousness.

The object of the purpose involved in the birth of a child, is achieved, as to its first stage, whether the child die immediately after birth, or live on the earthly plane; because human consciousness has appeared — has performed, as it were, the initial stage of its pilgrimage.

Moreover, one of the necessary conditions for the further development of human consciousness is its death, or passing, from the form which it takes for its earthly existence; and that condition is fulfilled even if the baby dies at birth.

Such consciousness, with its limitless capacity for future progress, is to be found nowhere else among created things. It is, in fact, in itself, a separate and independent entity.

It comes into being, at least, when a child is born — even though in the case of immediate death, it cannot avail itself of those opportunities — only to be found on earth — which were to qualify it for further progress on the plane beyond

the grave. Yet, at the same time, it will have been spared those blemishes and sullying influences which it would have almost certainly incurred, and which would have retarded its upward course.

By way of illustration, let me put it in this way.

We are born with a clean sheet, which is to serve as canvas, for a beautiful landscape painting.

In this life our task is to sketch in certain outlines only; and we cannot proceed with the subsequent work until we have left this earth.

In a few cases, we succeed in drawing the required outlines, but we generally contrive to spoil the canvas in some way — soil it with innumerable erasures, and generally make the clean sheet filthy.

As a result of which, the canvas will have to be cleaned and bleached — and restored to its spotless condition, in which we received it at the beginning.

The dirty cloth is placed in boiling water with the required acid added, and then rinsed, mangled and ironed and the boiling water, the acid, the rinsing, mangling and ironing are, to pursue the analogy, the different forms of Hell mentioned in the Qur-án, representing the cleansing processes which the canvas of the soul must undergo in order to be rendered fit for the resumption of the painting.

In the case, then, of the death of a very young child, the soul's canvas has received no touch

of the pencil, it leaves the earth without any attempt at drawing or outline, but, at the same time, without blemish and without spot.

And under careful guidance, it may be that these outlines will be drawn elsewhere — and the picture, in due time, be painted.

The truth has been beautifully expressed in one of the Sayings of the Prophet that "those babies who die are received in the careful arms of Abraham". For Abraham is the father of all nations, and a father's care will not be lacking for the little life cut off from earth.

The Qur-án advances yet another argument to show that the earth trappings of the spirit not only are not indispensable to the perfection of knowledge, but may, on occasions, tend to destroy the knowledge already attained, and so be no more a help but a hindrance.

The Book refers to the period of man's dotage — when his physical nature becomes very weak and his mental faculties are waning, and the knowledge that he has already gained is fast slipping away.

"And Allah has created you, then, He causes you to die, and of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that after having knowledge he does not know anything; surely Allah is Knowing, Powerful" (chap. xv, ver. 70).

The spirit of its earthly environment is the same, and that which was indispensably helpful to the attainment of knowledge has turned into a formidable hindrance.

Day by day when man sinks into dotage, he is losing more and more of the knowledge he has laboured so abundantly to obtain; and it is more desirable for the spirit to be free of its earthly covering than to remain.

But, be it remembered, we enter into this life devoid of any knowledge whatsoever. In the words of the Qur-án:

"And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers — you did not know anything — and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts that you may give thanks" (chap. xvi, ver. 78).

You may explain it by the word "forgetfulness" — but forgetfulness implies at least, something to remember; and our mind at birth is blank utterly — with all impressions of past experiences, if any, wiped out.

Exceptional intelligence in children cannot be ascribed to knowledge gained in a previous existence.

In the first place, examples of exceptional intelligence — apart from mere precocity, which is a perfectly natural and all too common blend of quickness and impudence — are extremely rare, and in the second place where it does occur, it may, in most cases be justly ascribed to heredity: and so the Qur-án by citing these two phenomena, our blankness of mind on entering the world and the impediment afforded by our earthly covering in old age, when it becomes a hindrance and a destroyer of knowledge, meets

the argument that this earthly sojourn and its environment, are not indispensable to the perfecting of knowledge.

GOOD AND EVIL. We have before us two theories as to the ultimate cause of things — the one originally advanced in Brahminism, and now adopted by Theosophists, the other set forth in the Qur-án.

The pre-measurement of good and evil by God, is, with us Muslims, an article of Faith; but this is not to be confused with Fatalism. We are not fatalists — nay, to a greater extent than others do we believe faithfully and steadfastly that man is the master of his own destiny, the Captain of his soul. If he will but put his hand to the means that God has freely given him, he may make every moment of his life beautiful — the desert places of his earthly pilgrimage, to blossom as the rose.

And — save only in cases of definite affliction and deprivation — these means are equally within the reach of all men.

Everything that comes from God is good — is designed for and intended to do good — but it must be used in the right way. Used fittingly and within limits it is of use to us. When those limits are disregarded, it is abused and, it may be, a source of harm. All poisons have their proper use, and each has been created for a special and beneficent purpose. When used for that purpose, it is good. Take the case of two drugs, having contrary properties; if we are to decide

as to their nature, are we to call one good and the other bad? That would scarcely be reasonable, seeing that each is good — and its evil is consequent only on misuse.

God created all things for the good of humanity, and made certain laws for their use, by conforming with which we are to make their goodness apparent. When we do not so conform, we turn what was good into evil, and suffer the consequences. These laws are pre-ordained and prescribed by God, and they are made known to us either by Divine Revelation or by scientific discovery — which is after all but another manner of that Revelation; and the fact that everything in Nature does work under prescribed laws, is one which no thinking person can seriously attempt to gainsay. Everything is, therefore, so designed as to exhibit its good qualities under given conditions — its evil qualities where these conditions are not regarded; so that the measure of evil they produce is commensurate with the measure of evil they suffer, and these measures, limits, or laws are pre-ordained of God.

It is in this sense only that Muslims believe in Pre-destination.

Under the theory of Karma, present pain and present happiness are pre-ordained as a consequence, respectively, of past evil or good actions; and it follows that if present actions fail to bear fruit, our destiny in this life is sealed already. Nothing we can do will alter it.

In the Muslim conception, on the other hand,

our destiny follows our actions in this life, in the observance of the law with respect to the use of things around us. If we keep within its limits we reap good, if not, evil overtakes us.

Of the two, the Muslim theory would seem to be more conducive to scientific research; and if we believe that the Divine Laws are immutable, and that all human misery is but the consequence of their violation, surely we have every incentive towards making ourselves acquainted with those laws — so that we may keep from offence. But in the Karma theory there is no such inducement at all. If misfortune befall us on account of some misdeed in a past life, no amont of knowledge will alleviate it in this. Conceivably it might help us in a life to come; but if this present life of ours is a sealed mystery, we can have no great inducement to work out our own salvation. Immediate palpable gain is, in almost every case, the best incentive, and in Karma, such incentive is impossible, while Islam places it foremost.

Have not scientific research and discovery contributed enormously to our comfort and happiness? Infant mortality has been reduced to a minimum, plague and pestilence have been fought and vanquished; travel by land or by water — nay and even by air — is unattended by any greater average of risk than attaches to sitting at home in an arm-chair; and all has come about by reason of our gradual discovery of the limits of use and abuse — the measurement of good and evil.

Whereas if a disaster — a railway accident — a shipwreck — or the crashing of an air-liner — is to take place as the consequence of some evil deed done in a past existence by one or other of the parties involved, no amount of human care or foresight can possibly avert it.

The old Brahmin books speak of various actions of a past life as resulting in corresponding bodily illnesses in the life to come. But if A. is foredoomed to catch a fever, and suffer from it, as the consequence of some past evil act, is it worth his while to consult a doctor?

Theories may be excellent and plausible as theories, but they must stand the test of reality.

We may be attracted by some ingenious theory, which professes to explain and reconcile every incongruity in the universe.

But the incongruous of to-day becomes the appropriate — nay, the commonplace — of to-morrow.

What, in old time was regarded as a danger, was so regarded simply because of our ignorance of the nature of it. Better knowledge has proved that thing to be really a blessing, if used properly and in the light of science.

No theory should be seriously entertained that does not tend to aid the increase of knowledge, and the sense of responsibility.

The laws of heredity and consanguinity are truths upon which the welfare of society depends. If I believe that the result of my actions will not stop short with me, in my own life; but will

continue and, affect the lives of others yet to be, it is the duty of religion and of legislation so to control my actions that they may not spread their evil effects broadcast.

The law of heredity is very simply stated in the 20th chapter of the Book of Exodus, and the Qur-án gives a warning to the like effect.

Will not some of the Eugenic laws, in a form less severe than that which is demanded by their advocates, secure the happiness of the coming generation?

If the Creator has announced that it is one of His laws that the coming generation which is to inherit the good things of its ancestors, must also inherit the consequences of their evil actions — and if our belief that this is so, is strong and sincere, then surely, anxiety for our children's sake will prevent us from doing any act which may bring misfortune on them.

In conclusion, I would repeat that no one can prove the truth of either of the theories under discussion on materialist grounds; and that precedence in belief should be given to that theory which encourages knowledge and a sense of duty.

RETURNABILITY OF THE MATTER. There is, however, another aspect of Nature's working which may perhaps induce us to accept for the moment the theory under discussion — the ultimate returning of all ingredients, in all earthly organisms, to their original form.

There is no waste in Nature. When any form of matter becomes decomposed, its component

parts disperse and, sometimes it may be, resume their original shapes.

Here is a circumstance which may perhaps lead the advocates of the theory to argue the return of the unperfected spirit to its earthly sojourn.

But such is not the case; and for this reason.

Everything consists of two parts which we will call J and A. J is the essence and A its covering. — the Substance and the accident.

Everything is moving towards the one far off divine event — perfection or fulfilment. There are many stages to be passed on the way, and in each stage J assimilates something from its environment which tends to aid in making A actual and existent; those latent potentialities which are intended to be disclosed at that stage. When the thing has passed through that stage, and is about to enter on the next in the ascending scale, it becomes decomposed; that is to say its two parts become separated. J the essence in its developed form, going on, but A, the matter which J has assimilated, returns to nature to be again assimilated by other progressive entities.

The seed, planted in the earth, passes through many stages before it bears fruit; and in each stage the processes of assimilation and decomposition are going on every minute.

The essence of the seed continues, from stage to stage — but the covering it takes in each stage is left behind at the conclusion of that stage.

In the growth of our bodies, too, the same thing is discernible.

Every minute, some secretion or other passes out of the body, and returns to nature — so that, it has been said, in the course of seven years, we get an absolutely new body; but the essence of the body does not change.

J in this case, is consciousness; and A is the body.

When we leave the earth, it is our consciousness that goes, leaving behind the body which was only an assistance to growth on this earthly plane, and no essential part of the equipment of progress.

It is obvious that every man's consciousness does not attain perfection nor indeed come within very close range of the limit fixed for the development attainable on earth.

Does unperfected consciousness, then, return to the earth, assuming the shape of some other organism to perfect its growth? Or does it take on other and new clothing, which awaits it in its struggle towards perfection, to aid its further progress in the life beyond the grave?

The things to be attained — assimilated — on the plane of earth, are knowledge, and that which should be its natural consequent — experience; or, in other words, the development of those moral qualities which constitute perfection in humanity.

The animal element in all of us, which is evolved from the physical side of our nature, comprises certain passions and emotions; and these, sublimated into a moral and spiritual nature, bring us to perfection on this plane; such perfection

being attainable by knowledge and experience, which, in their turn, need opportunity and occasion, which may not fall to the lot of every person. Hence, it has been argued, reincarnation becomes not reasonable merely, but necessary.

Knowledge, in short, is necessary if we are to perfect our earthly course, and in the physical side of our being lies the chief impediment to knowledge.

Mental power becomes intensified as bodily strength diminishes.

The faculty of perception — I suppose it may be called perceptivity — is potentially equal in every man; but when it is least hindered by the fleshly integument, it is enhanced to a marvellous degree.

Does it not follow, therefore, that this faculty would be better fitted for its high emprise — the achievement of knowledge — if it could sever itself completely from its physical entanglement?

Here, on earth, the eyes of the mind are not fully open — their vision is blurred, obscured, unpenetrating, and it is our physical nature that makes it so.

Death alone will remove the blur — dissipate the obscurity, bring the vision that penetrates and perceives clearly.

"Now we see through a glass darkly, but then, face to face", said the Christian Apostle; and in death all things become clear to us.

Here, on our earthly pilgrimage, the spirit is, as it were a blindfolded being, groping for knowledge.

Life's experiences and hardships will lift the bandage a little — and to the extent that knowledge is increased thereby do we advance on our quest towards perfection.

Our progress, therefore, depends on the raising of the bandage — the tearing of the veil; and seeing that the process is gradual, the knowledge comes to us gradually, in the natural course of things; easily and without pain or hardship.

Death will bring the final revelation — it may be gradually and peacefully; it may be with pain and violence; but when Death has removed the bandage — Perfect Knowledge will appear.

Wherefore, perfection, in this life, is, in great part indeed, the perfecting of our power of receiving knowledge.

Where humanity has attained its utmost set limit of perfection, it is qualified for further progress in another sphere; but in the case of an imperfect soul it is not so, and with its imperfections exposed to a stronger current, as it were, of knowledge its task of development becomes more painful — more difficult. The soul's bitterness of remorse when it finds its inability to keep pace with others becomes intensified — the sense of impotence and disqualification — and the infinitely painful task of qualifying oneself in some abnormal way, are certain of the forms of Hell described in the Qur-án.

So, to sum up, there is no progress at all if we are to enter into this world a second time,

blindfolded as before — more especially in view of the fact that the screen has been removed once.

There are better chances of acquiring more, and yet more knowledge, than to go through another earthly existence; more especially when the hindrances of our physical vesture have been done away with.

The knowledge vouchsafed to us in trances or visions is of greater worth to us in our struggle towards perfection, than that which we attain in the normal course of our everyday life.

I myself have learnt many things from visions — things which otherwise could only have come to me through years of experience — years of learning and, it may be, not even then.

In dealing with my own character my experience has been the same. Often something which constitutes a real blemish on the soul remained hidden from me for a long time — or when appearing, showed itself in a false and alluring garb — so that I never thought of reforming myself in that respect at all. Nevertheless at the appointed time, I saw in a vision, and beheld it, in all its ugliness. Horrible, painful and bitter were the moments of the vision; but when I arose from my bed, I had seen the truth which, alas, I might never have suspected till my dying day.

From this we learn two things — first, that inasmuch as trances and visionary powers come into play only when the physical senses are asleep, and while the mind is working to the full unimpeded, the soul of man is better qualified to

make up its deficiencies when totally divested of its earthly garb, than if it were to come a second time to earth in human shape.

And the second thing is this; that a few moments painful experience in a dream may produce a more profitable — a more chastening effect than years of hardship could bring about.

Will not Hell, then, be a speedier and better road to the reformation of character than another life on earth; seeing that the hardships of life are reckoned the best teachers, and by them, virtue and high character are held to be most fitly moulded?

## CHAPTER VII.

## SPIRITUALISM THE PHENOMENA.

A THING perhaps needed in the West. A practical demonstration of life after death in the spiritism-aspect of the movement. Religion, without faith in the life beyond the grave, becomes an institution inefficacious to enforce its demands. Belief in the accountability of man's every action in some future is the only check against evil tendencies. Many of our sins remain undetected in this life. Many a miscreant may avoid detection and consequently public censure. Disbelief in the coming Unavoidable Accountability, therefore, would leave depravity unbridled. Hence, belief in the post-grave life is the essential of religion.

Materialism could not be favourable to such belief, though it is reality with us. Life and death, or death and life is, to a Muslim, a common phenomenon. I am quite positive about it. Have I not visited people in the hell? I have tasted also blessings of heaven. Such experiences are within the acquisition of the human race, but patience, abstemiousness and an exclusive pursuit of the life of a Muslim Sufi, with love and devotion, bring man to that life. There

is an awakening to it in the West, as well, but as that race is only emerging from dry materialism, and is to some extent given up to luxury and pleasure, our austerities will not suit them.

To the Occidental with his usual want of imagination, and his reluctance to go beyond the surface, Spiritism-observations were the only remedy to cure scepticism in things of the world hereafter. No wonder if spirit visitation came as a divine economy to bring home here the lacking belief. Anyhow, belief in the hereafter is on its way to restoration here; no matter if some are duped, or deluded, or victimized to cheat or swindle. Most of the order are good and honest people, striving after the truth and working for what may be called the real salt of life. I admire their ways and really enjoy their conversation. There is a tinge of that strength of belief in their talk, without which walks in the avenue of Spirituality are an impossibility.

No wonder to me if one receives visits from the denizens of the other world. Death after all is a passage from here to hereafter. Who can deny the continuity of consciousness? If a child shows traits of his parents' consciousness, and sometimes inherits most of it, has not consciousness travelled from one worldly body of the parent to the other worldly body of the son? A clear proof as to the continuity of consciousness; death cannot kill it. A caterpillar has become a butterfly; but could a butterfly come

back to the caterpillar-world? Some caterpillars "assert that they have seen" butterflies. How can I deny it, when I have seen the people of the world behind the screen? I have talked to them. I have discussed with them questions of importance. They have enlightened me on the difficult problems of Theology. They came to my guidance when I groped in the darkness, and discretion and reason ware trembling in some critical moments of my life. Often and often I have been a victim to incurable maladies when the medical verdict or treatment did not inspire hope; but the inhabitants of the Garden of God came to my help. They prescribed me drugs not on the official list of the pharmacopœia, and with wonderful results — this all from the other world. How can I refuse to lend a favourable ear to a spiritualist friend if he comes to me with a story of ghosts? I know over-zeal in the cause unconsciously gets the better of his judgment, and his narratives unintentionally become coloured. He forgets to note many a circumstantial fact which is more responsible for visualization than anything from beyond the grave. Imagination is a creative agency of unimaginable potency. Have I not myself perceived my own thoughts materialized in my "twenty's"? I always mistook them for realities. I remember those days. A well-meaning sceptic among my friends always tried to explain them on philosophic bases, to my great hatred. I loathed his very face; but I am quite positive now that he was

not wrong after all and I was in error. I may say so now when the experiences and observations of twenty years more have made me saner in my deductions. No one, therefore, should deprecate these fantastical experiences which are dawning on the Western horizon. We should make allowances for a beginner. Discouragement and strictures will curb the truth which has just been emerging from materialistic clouds. I must hail the silvery line.

But the question of questions is, whether the apparitions we see in our dreams and visions are from the world of departed souls? Do the denizens of the post-grave regions really pay visits to us? They may bear the same form and may be clothed in the same figure and features which they had when on the earth. They might give us sometimes knowledge of things which could only belong to them. This may stand as a sound argument to substantiate visits of the translated souls — a logical datum, no doubt, to prop what can be said in favour of spiritism; but it cannot be conclusive. It has its explanations; besides, how are we to account for such visions in which we see persons still on this earthly plane? I have seen them. They enlightened me on things decidedly beyond their own knowledge. Have I not met them the following morning after the night when I saw them in vision? I inquired of them of the very subject they were talking to me in my dreams. Not only were they quite ignorant of the visionary

occurrence, but the very object as talked about in dream was strange to them; and I may say much beyond their reach of knowledge. This shows that the theory of "sending thought" is not a satisfactory explanation. I think I would do better if I give here some of the incidents.

We often dream of people, alive, or departed from this world; but the figures which appear to us in such dreams and visions are not necessarily the spirits of the people they seem to represent. Here I speak of real dreams; and not of those fantastical experiences that come to us in our sleep, where imagination, passion, subconsciousness, indigestion, or some disorder in the system, are chiefly responsible for all that becomes visualized therein. Similarly dreams sometimes forecast coming diseases — a thing well known to physicians in the East. Strange figures appearing in dreams, in black and fiery colours, are not necessarily to be taken as the spirits of persons from Abyssinia, or of denizens of the infernal region. Rather do they indicate a preponderance of melancholic humour in the body in various degrees. There are times also when, in our dreams, we appear to go through the action of swimming; but that, again, is only the coming cold, or humour, in the body materialized; while a highly feverish temperature will assume the form of fire. Sometimes anger appears in the same shape; and the whole subject is full of interest and instruction, especially for the people in the West, who are just becoming awakened to psychic research. But

I must postpone consideration of the question in its general aspects to another time, and confine myself to the point I have in view.

In order to show that the figures we see in dreams are not necessarily the spirits of the people of whom we are dreaming, I may record here a few incidents. In 1913 I was in Paris. I am an early riser, and one June night I left my bed between two and three o'clock A.M. for my midnight prayers and meditations. I felt a very peculiar sensation, resembling backache, some six inches below the neck. I did not feel it while sitting or standing, or while doing any work in an ordinary posture; but some particular movement of the body would make my back painful, as if something had become deeply rooted somewhere in the system. Needless to say that I consulted many doctors in Paris and London, and remained under their treatment for months. Turkish baths were also advised, but all was of no avail. My only alternative was, then, to pray to God for some guidance; and so I prayed for many weeks. One night in November, in the same year, H. H. Sir A— appeared to me in a dream and suggested that I should write at once to India for a particular kind of lentil which grows only in certain hilly tracts of the country, and is unknown to the average Indian, and the lentils prepared in a certain way would give me relief. He also informed me that a nephew of mine was on the eve of his departure to this country. My letter reached the young man in

time, in the same week that he had to leave for England. He brought me the needed grains, and their use, as directed, gave me relief after six months. I knew for a fact that Sir A— was neither a physician nor interested in medicinal research. Though I knew the source of the dream, yet curiosity, accentuated by the new theories of thought-transference by spirit agencies now obtaining in the West, led me to ask Sir A— when we met some months after. He not only denied possession of any medicinal knowledge, but added that he had not heard of the said lentil ever before in his life. On my questioning him further, he also had to admit, though with reluctance, that nothing in the last few months had occurred to remind him of me.

Another incident will, perhaps, better illustrate the subject under discussion. Some years ago I became a helpless victim to a form of nerve-trouble. The complaint reached its climax in the end of the following year. Harley Street doctors and Harrogate baths did me little good, and electric treatment only aggravated the case. In the next year I was advised to leave the country, but my sojourn in my home and the medical treatment there were of very little efficacy. My last resort was to Him who causes things to grow and places wonderful properties in them. One October night I saw in a dream two doctors attending me. They were, and still are, my bosom friends and next-door neighbours. One had a phial in his hand with some dark-red liquid

in it, which the other was about to inject into my system with a syringe. When asked by me, they described the liquid as a mixture of — and —. The very next morning brought us together. When, however, I related to them the experience of the previous night, they not only denied any thought-transference from them to me during that night, but also denied knowledge of the properties of one of the two said drugs, as it was not "official." They were also very emphatic against my using it, as they ascribed my dream to some sub-conscious imagination. I had to submit to their judgment, though I knew well how to distinguish between a real dream and an ordinary phantasm, and the dream I experienced had all the signs of reality. I waited yet another year. Treatment from various physicians and doctors in my motherland brought no improvement. I became desperate, I obtained the mixture of which I had dreamed and applied it, and its use, for a week, produced wonderful results.

These are not isolated instances. I can record many others of a similar nature to substantiate my contention that apparitions of living persons in dreams and visions are not of necessity the spirits of the persons we dream of. No doubt I cannot make the same assertion with the same confidence as to those who have left this earth. But if our dreams of persons living have nothing to do with the spirits or the thoughts of those persons, the same may surely apply to

the case of those who have passed from this earthly sphere. If we accept the two dreams I have cited as data, no one can question the conclusion that they were truth and reality. The theory of "subconsciousness," or "some forgotten knowledge," possibly received days before, of the revealed medicine, would not explain the phenomena. If the property of a drug is not known to the doctors, if the drug itself is neither on their official list of medicines nor is the product of my country, I wonder how it could come within my knowledge, even in my early days. Some twenty years ago, when I was shown a thing in a dream of certain good to me, its name was given in a language unknown to me. A month after I went to the man who showed it to me in the dream, though I knew that he had nothing to do with it, and had been a mere instrument used by the forces of the Unseen. He denied all knowledge of the thing. I inquired concerning it from many men who could have enlightened me in the matter, but all in vain. After full two years, another name of the same thing was given to me in a dream, this time in Sanskrit — a language which is at present not spoken, nor had I studied it. Anyhow it was a better clue, and I could find the thing out within a fortnight. Its colour and shape was the same as were revealed to me, and its effect that which I needed.

This experience of mine hushed all such voices in my judgment as ascribed visionary experiences to "subconsciousness," or "knowledge forgotten."

Having dabbled in Western culture and materialistic philosophy, I had my own doubts about what I am writing here. Pro-and-con theories never reach a satisfactory conclusion. Personal experience is the only true key that will solve the mystery. I believe that most dreams and phantasmal experiences spring from the imagination, and can rightly be explained on materialistic lines. But there is another category of dreams, which cannot be traced to such a source, and, as I have explained, the theory of thought-transference is also of no great help. Our belief is — and it is borne out by the experience of generations of Muslim Sufis — that when a man prays to God, and He condescends to speak to him, the dream is one of the several means which the Omniscient uses in revealing His mind to His votaries. Phantoms and apparitions which appear to spiritually developed minds in visions or dreams in response to prayer, or in order to guide them when they are in darkness, are the momentary creations of God. Each form or figure which thus appears has nothing to do personally with the individual it represents; sometimes the figure is created on account of its very name, if it has got any meaning, as is invariably the case in the East. Sometimes a special connection of the figure dreamed of with the dreamer explains the matter. In the first and third of the instances I have recorded a part of the name of the persons of whom I dreamt is the name of God, which means that the message has come from God.

Anyhow, I hail this awakening in the West. It is a good beginning, and the Western peoples will come to the true knowledge after all. Reactions in history have never been unattended with such experiences.

I had recently two further dream-experiences, which persuade me to dismiss the idea of "thought-transference" in the matter as throwing any real-light on the question of dreams. The first is as follows: Mr. W— appeared to me in a dream, beseeching me for urgent pecuniary help. The said gentleman I know quite well to be above financial troubles. He has, however, the misfortune to possess certain physical defects. On the following afternoon another gentleman, suffering from physical defects precisely similar to those of Mr. W—, came to me, and to my great surprise asked for help, almost in the same terms as those used by the apparition of the previous night. The only thing in common between the apparition of Mr. W— and the gentleman who called to see me is this same physical disability.

The other experience is, I think, more conclusive. I had a serious complaint last month, and a doctor friend wanted to help me. One Sunday he brought me some pills, which I accepted, as in courtesy bound, but without, as I frankly confess, any intention of taking them, or any particular desire to put them to the test. A few days passed, and the complaint became more troublesome. I prayed to God incessantly for

a full week for the cure. And one day, in a vision like a dream, a stage such as that we see in a theatre, came before me, and I saw an English child, of an age apparently between nine and ten, frolicking about on it, reciting the while some English verses with the chorus, "Mirror Pills, my name, so and so." The dream left me with all the effects of a true vision in my mind. The phrase "Mirror pills" did not sound to me like particularly good or intelligible English. Besides, it conveyed no meaning whatever. I consulted my *Webster,* and found the following as one of the meanings of the word Mirror: "Any polished, or smooth substance, as water, that forms images by the reflection of rays of light."

Here was another puzzle. But the postman's knock brought me that morning a letter from this same doctor friend, who urged me to give a trial to his pills. I looked for those pills, and I was surprised to find them brilliant and glossy enough to reflect rays of light. I used them as directed, and they brought me the cure. Here is a typical example, which admits of no explanation from spiritualistic or materialistic quarters. Probably, I may say, surely, the doctor of whom I have spoken must have been thinking of me, and if transfer of thought had anything to do with it the apparition should have been in the person of the doctor. Neither do the theories of subconsciousness, imagination, or association help at all to explain it. Even after the dream I did not think of, or remember, the pills given

to me by the doctor. In any case I could never have given them the name of "Mirror pills," even if I had properly examined them before. The message in the dream had been put in the mouth of a child, and the description was a child's description, so was the designation. We describe things according to our conception of them, or in the terms of such logic as we possess. If we desire to describe a thing with precision, then our knowledge, such as it is, of the properties and attributes of that thing will suggest to us some outstanding quality by which we may distinguish it. Every one is more apt than not to describe a thing by that one of its features which strikes him most. If the dream in question was the outcome of my imagination and the association of my ideas, I should have named it, either after the doctor, or the complaint from which I was suffering. But if a child had to name the pills, the gloss and brilliancy of them would be the first thing to appeal to his mind, more especially as he would be incapable of conceiving of any of their other attributes. That the message conveyed through the child in response to my longing, or prayer, for some efficacious remedy, revealed to me the true remedy, and was no hallucination, appears from the results achieved by using the pills. Here was neither thought-transference nor the play of my imagination or subconsciousness.

Muslims do believe in the power of thought and its transference, but not on the lines sug-

gested by certain of the Spiritualists. We know of ways by which communications may be made from one mind to another without the use of normal means. But that has nothing to do with such phantasmal experiences as I have related. Possibly I may write on the subject later on; but I wonder what a Spiritualist friend would say about these dreams of mine. Possibly, he would account for them as messages from spirits in the ghostland, who are interested in me. But why not attribute them to the Supreme Spirit Whom I have addressed in my prayers? With us Muslims, such dreams indicate the initial stage of spiritual growth, when the mind of man begins to receive messages from Allah, the Source of all knowledge. Mankind is invested with wonderful capacities and senses beyond the materialistic ken. Besides our five senses, we have other interior senses. The inner sense of hearing and seeing when cultivated enables their owner to see and hear things quite outside the range of normal conditions. They have nothing to do with what are commonly called clairvoyance and clairaudience. They represent something of a very sacred nature—a power within the scope of human acquisition, but demanding strong discipline of character. The cultivation of this power was not unknown to the people in the East, but the course they pursued was long and cumbersome, and full of rigid austerity. Islam came to simplify it and render it not inconsistent with our necessary attendance to the other calls of

mundane life. Briefly, we have to control the physical side of our nature and weaken its hold on the mind. There are very few people in the whole world who have never had the experience of a true dream. Almost every one can remember at least one incident of the kind in his life. Our occult powers begin to develop the more, in proportion as our physical nature tends to assert itself less. While we are asleep all our external senses become dormant, and thus we are brought nearer to that state of the mind wherein its latent faculties become awakened. But if we are under the thraldom of the flesh and the lusts of the flesh, unconscious though we may be of their domination while asleep, subconsciously the mind is still under their control; and, hence, less capable of spiritual progression. It is a common experience that the last hours of the night are the more favourable for true dreams. The reason is obvious. The mind has been freed for many hours from external cares, agitations, and impulses, and has thereby become more qualified to have its inner eyes opened. If a person would be capable of exercising the secret power of which I speak, this is the state of the mind to which he must attain, even in his waking moments. His control of the carnal side of his nature enables him to ignore the animal element that is in him, even while he is conscious and acting under normal conditions. I wonder if the many mediums in the West are not the victims of delusion. Their life and their environment

do not indicate the development of occult power. We need not doubt their veracity. They may be quite genuine in the statement of their experiences. It must then be a gift (and not an advanced spirituality) which the Divine economy has granted to some in order to strengthen their belief in the life after death. It must be confessed, however, that the messages we have received through such mediumship have hardly added to the treasure of our knowledge.

## CHAPTER VIII.

# MESSAGES FROM THE SUPREME SPIRIT AND THE SPIRITS.

TILL now I have confined myself to recording dreams in which the apparition of other persons has been the instrument of bringing a message to me. Dreams of this kind may be such as to warrant the impression that the apparitions really represent the originals; but there are dreams where the dreamer himself becomes the passive medium of a message to himself. In the foregoing pages I have purposely set down those of my dreams through which various medicines were revealed to me to cure me of bodily illness when the case had become apparently beyond aid. Most of these refer to one and the same complaint, which began in 1914, and I think now, after eight years, I am at last nearing recovery. The first of the series came to me in February 1915. At that time the nature of my ailment had not been rightly ascertained. Here, as well as in India, medical diagnosis could not do more than discover that there was something wrong in the stomach and liver; consequently the treatment was useless. It was sometime between 1 and 2 A. M. of a February night, when I was sitting on a "prayer-mat",

deep in meditation, that I fell into a trance and in my vision I saw a bottle full of honey and milk in my hand, with a few powders of potassium bromide. These I mixed with the contents of the bottle and took a glass from it. Soon after I resumed my normal condition, I realized that the vision was sent to me to disclose a specific for my malady. But I reflected that as bromide tends to be enervating in its effects, the suggested mixture might injure my nerves. I made mention of this very fact in my prayer, and after a few minutes I saw a "hoary-headed durwaish" who came to me and sat on the same "prayer-mat". He told me that I was right in my apprehension, but that the mixture did contain honey and milk to act as an antidote against the ill-effects of the bromide. At that time I was on a journey. Two months after, I came home and consulted my doctor friends, requesting them to find out my trouble, having regard to the medicine revealed to me in my dream.

This time it was easy to unravel what had remained a mystery till then, and the real complaint was discovered, simply through this revealed medicine. Could there be imagined an example of a vision better calculated than this to dispel the theories of thought-transference, spirit-visits, imagination, sub-consciousness and the like? At the time of the dream I knew the properties of the bromide; but inasmuch as the complaint itself was unknown to me and I had never had so much as a hint from any medical

man as to its cause, how could my subconscious knowledge of the drug be responsible for the vision? Similarly, if I knew that milk and honey formed an antidote to the ill-effects of the bromide, how am I to account for my uneasiness at the time? That I had to pray on this point, and that the old man came in answer to my prayer, to remove my apprehensions, clearly shows that the vision cannot be explained on materialistic grounds. The old man in the vision might be a spirit, but the first vision clearly shows that I myself was used as the medium by the Unseen Power for the message that came in response to my prayer. My prayers were directly to Allah. I did not invoke, and I never do invoke, the help of any spirit or angel.

We, Muslims, believe that God hears and God speaks. His attributes are never in abeyance. If He used to speak to the seers and the sages in the olden days, why should He remain silent to-day if a worshipper with real and unfeigned devotion approaches Him and lays open his heart to Him? He is all Love, and, so we are told by our Holy Prophet, feels more affection for His creatures than a mother does for her children. For full eighteen months I was a miserable victim to an ailment known neither to me nor to the physicians I consulted. No case could have been more helpless than mine; and if I approached Him with humility of mind, there was no reason why I should not be blessed with a word from Him.

And in this respect I want to say something to those who are interested in spirit-visits and the messages received from the ghost-land. I see no reason to doubt the veracity and honesty of purpose of my Spiritist friends, but I should like to see them engaged in higher pursuits. A message from the spirit-world is a possibility. It is the only means to strengthen our belief in the life after death which appeals to a materialistic mind. Great good will, no doubt, be forthcoming if the belief becomes popular in this matter-of-fact, materialism-ridden West. But whether it contributes to the self-edification of the individual or brings any real knowledge of the sort of which we badly stand in need, it is not for me to express an opinion. On the other hand, its abuse cannot fail to cause harm, for it is a practice which excites curiosity, encourages credulity, and has opened the door to swindling in many quarters. Simple-minded people are imposed upon and put to needless and fruitless occupation and anxiety. Most of the messages we have received through current Spiritism are of a very common-place nature, and have added nothing to our treasure of knowledge. Compare it with that knowledge which has come to the world through the generations of the prophets from the Supreme Spirit. Look to those Ten commandments revealed to Moses, and, I may say, to his predecessors in the prophethood, as recent researches establish. Are they not the genesis and basic principles of the

world's manifold systems of civil and moral laws? See what splendid additions have been made to the treasure of healthy knowledge by Confucius, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Socrates and Jesus. Though the messages they brought from the Lord to mankind for its guidance have not reached us in the original purity, they still contain gems of rare worth, and still guide humanity to the path of righteousness. In this connection I may refer to the message revealed to mankind in the form of the Qur-án. All the previous messages have been collected and freed from human interpolations and systematized in a practicable form. The message not only tells of our highest capabilities as well as our shortcomings, but also shows us ways whereby we may work out the former and guard against the latter. On the one hand we are a helpless prey to our baser passions; on the other the moral and ethical side of our nature makes us capable of soaring higher than the angels. A message is needed to free us from the tangle and put us on our path to the goal. Inaccurate and mistaken knowledge, received through divers channels, has not only marred human progress but played havoc with our higher powers. We needed a plain and straight course, and I think I may safely say that the last message of God, through the prophet of Arabia, has given it to us. The message applies itself first to the everyday trials and temptations of an average man. It deals with our animal nature. It does not suggest

the curtailment of our human cravings, but it regulates them, and under divers courses of control turns them into morality; which being done the Qur-án prescribes yet another course to raise the moral order to a spiritual order. In short, the Qur-ánic message provides a code whereby we may sublimate our base passions into a lofty spirituality; and it is at this stage, we are told in the same message, that many of our occult faculties manifest themselves. Our inner senses begin to stir and we move in the world of angels. Leaving aside the merits and demerits of any such Message from the Supreme Spirit, no one can deny the importance and necessity of the message of which I speak. If we do believe in the life after death, and also believe that many of our faculties will receive their full fruition only in the life beyond the grave, do we not badly need some message which may enable us to qualify to reap so great a harvest?

I have read many of the messages received through spirit mediums. Curiosity may induce wonder in many, but I seldom found them, in any striking degree, edifying. I have seen a medium giving messages to scores of persons in assemblies convened for the purpose. Possibly he saw many persons there over whom a spirit was hovering. The dress and colour, and sometimes the features and age of the spirit, have been also described to us, which are often of an ordinary type and may not interest many.

Then comes the message; and to my great disappointment it has told me little or nothing.

If in our general reading we are justified in making a selection of good books because life is too short to be wasted in studying trash, would it not be wiser if we give up the pursuits of spirit-messages and spend our time in the things which are able to qualify us for holding communication with the Great Spirit? Not only would it bring to us knowledge of the most beneficial sort, but it would also induce cleanliness of life and purity of soul. What, on earth or in heaven, can we gain by attending such seances as those in which we have to sing vulgar street songs or listen to the commonplaces of an alleged spirit of an alleged soldier who, perhaps, died with a bottle of whisky in his pocket and this same song on his lips?

In conclusion, let me return for a moment to some of the dreams I have mentioned. It must never be forgotten, as I have said, that these dreams are the very initial and primary means of receiving messages from the Great Fountain of all knowledge, and is not in any sense to be compared with that transcendental knowledge which comes to the few who, through their devotion and love for God have received Divine blessings. To cut a long story short, I may recapitulate my case thus. I once became a victim to a disease of a very complicated nature. It was the result of mental strain, but at the same time, medical help was of no avail, seeing that the malady

could not be defined. The dream message not only gave the remedy, but furnished, besides, an efficacious clue for finding the cause of the complaint. It could have brought me the required cure, but the cause of my complaint was still in existence. The medicine did good, but again the trouble assumed a new feature, and just like a medical man who changes the prescription in accordance with the course of the ailment, so every now and then a message from the Supreme Spirit prescribed a new drug. First, I am the medium of a message to myself; secondly, the message comes through a hoary-headed durwaish, then through the apparition of two doctor fiends of mine, and, lastly, in the form of an English child. Leaving aside all other explanations, it has been a big struggle in my life for the last eight years. Mental strain and overwork have very often made my case hopeless, and these messages in response to my beseeching prayers, with my head on the earth and tears in my eyes, have come to my complete rescue.

## CHAPTER IX.

# LATENT HUMAN FACULTIES:
## Séances; Working Miracles, &c.

ELECTRICITY in the battery, and electricity operating under the domination and control of the human mind, are two different things. One is accumulated brute force, the other a force working with design and purpose, such as we observe in telegraphy and telephony, wireless or otherwise. The human mind in the latter case, though working through telegraphy, yet stands beside it, accomplishing its design through the medium of electricity by means of the requisite appliances. It cannot subdue the electric force to its will without the use of certain plant and appliances. Suppose, however, that the human mind entered into a battery of electricity, or became clothed with an electric body instead of with a physical body, man would then become able to do all that he is doing through electric appliances. Sometimes, for example, we have to travel a distance of hundreds of miles. That is the intention of the mind. Its desire is to reach its destination with electric rapidity, but its present covering — that is to say, its physical body — retards its purpose. It is compelled, therefore, to resort to the quickest available means of con-

veyance, and in these days one operated by electricity is generally selected when available. But if man's body were of electricity, then it could, in the twinkling of an eye, travel whithersoever it desired to go. Such a thing is not an impossibility. Our mental working illustrates it clearly. The minute we think of a place, it comes before our mental vision. Of course the vision brings only those things before us which we have already seen; and the whole process we ascribe, in popular parlance to the power of imagination. But with an electric body such as I have suggested, we could reach the place personally and become cognisant of all its surroundings. In the last instalment of this diary I referred to a similar experience of mine, in which, while sitting in my own room, I found myself in the house of another gentleman at a distance of four miles from my place. I was cognisant of both the environments, that is to say, I was fully aware of two rooms, one in my house and the other in the house of the gentleman. I was also conscious of myself standing between them both, the distance of four miles between the two being bridged over by a viaduct, as it were, of electricity.

If the æther in its first collocation gives birth to electrons, which through various complexities and complications assume the form of the human body with the mind as its ruler, then the phenomenon I have cited becomes an intelligible possibility. The human body, after all, is only a

gross form of electricity. The coverings on it are too thick to allow exhibition of its electric qualities. Our power of sight and of hearing, as well as our other organs of sense, could, electrically, work wonders, and they are quite capable of doing so inasmuch as they arose at their inception out of electronic complexities, were it not for the manifold coverings they have assumed in the manifold stages of their journey from the nebula to the human mind. The things which we see in visions and dreams, and which we experience in trances are apt illustrations of our capabilities of this kind. While asleep or in a trance, our physical nature and its working become dormant; in other words, the electric elements in us become freed of their hampering environments, and it is not to be wondered at if we see and hear things beyond the normal limits of sight and hearing — not surprising that sometimes our inner sight sees events which are yet to come. We Muslims do believe that all events, if they are ultimately destined to make their appearance on the earthly plane do, in fact, make their appearance on other planes as well, before they reach that of earth. Their shape on every such other plane through which they pass in their evolutionary course partakes of the essential characteristics of the plane in which they chance to be for the time being. If in an electronic plane, their shape is made up of electrons, and if they be revealed to any seer in trance or vision, it is in this electronic shape that we must

see them. It is for this reason that, in our dreams or visions, we see one thing and give to it the interpretation of another. Some twenty-five years ago I saw the name of a gentleman written in stars on the sky. It was in a dream, and I thought the name was conspicuous enough for everyone on earth to see it. The gentleman at the time was an unknown personage, but to-day his name is a household word throughout the whole Muslim world. In those days also I was sleeping one night on the top of a house, with another gentleman beside me; it was a summer night, with the Indian starry heaven over us; and I saw in a dream that a great luminary had arisen in the middle of the sky. It was more lustrous than the moon, and bigger in size as well, but one could bear to gaze on it. All of a sudden a streak of light flashed from it and went towards the west; then it shot downwards towards the earth. At the far limit of the horizon, where there was a piece of land full of thistles and thorn and all kinds of weeds the streak began to work rapidly up and down like the needle of a sewing machine; and as it worked the weed began to burn, until a great portion of the land has become cleared of the weed. Then the streak shot back and was merged again into that luminous ball, from which it presently flashed again, this time towards the eastern horizon, where was another island patch, as it were, full of similar weeds and rank growth. The streak began to work again in the same

way as it had done in the west. The scene was very fascinating, and I could not help getting the gentleman beside me to share my enjoyment of the wonderful sight. In my dream I awakened him, and he also rejoiced at the sight. Then I asked him what was the time. He consulted his watch and said it was 2 a. m. The dream left me, and I was wide awake with some words on my lips which ran thus: "The gardener has come, and he would cut all the trees which bear no fruit and burn them." Now I actually did awaken the gentleman and I actually did ask him the time. It was the same as he had told me in the dream. This signified to me that the rest of the dream was also a reality. I knew what it meant, but I am afraid I cannot disclose it in these pages. It referred to a great event, far-reaching in its consequences. The utmost I can say is that the event which I saw in the form of the lustrous streak flashing from the luminary in the sky, twenty-eight years ago, took nineteen years to appear on our plane, in its very, very earliest stage. Perhaps the event was at that time in the starry land, and being there it appeared to me in that shape. Had it been on another plane, it would have assumed a shape peculiar to that other plane.

Muslims have written voluminous books on the subject, based upon the experience of generations dealing with the interpretation of visions and dreams. To resume the subject, our physical body, with the mind in it, has been

evolved out of electronic complexity. If we were able to pass through the various processes of purification and refinement, it is just as possible for the earthly components of the body to become dead, that is to say, inactive and inoperative, which, being done, the electric portion in the body will become the freer in its activities with the mind as ruler of our human electrical frame, will it be surprising if we work things which appear wonders and miracles in the eyes of others?

Dead matter begins to move if we charge it with electricity, but we have to procure a battery for the purpose. On the other hand, electricity is in us, and if we could use it in the same way as we use the electricity in a battery, it would be no impossible thing for the touch of Moses to make a rod move like a serpent. A man lately dead may come to animation for a while and stand and move, if a Jesus or a Muhammad, with his earthly nature sublimated into an electric nature, touches the corpse. Those who were brought to life by the prophetic touch, as we read in the sacred books of different religions, Hebrew, Muslim and Christian, received their re-animation only for a short time. It was the electricity of the body of the miracle-worker that worked the wonder. Some may assert that certain of the dead people restored to life by certain prophets lived a long life subsequently. History is silent on the subject. Moreover, the subjects of the miracles, I mean the persons who

were brought to re-animation, possibly did not die, though for all purposes they seem to have become dead. In such cases the seemingly dead person, when revived, could live for a long time.

People in the West nowadays are much taken up by clairaudience, clairvoyance and the like. These are mere playthings. For some few moments the earthly elements in a person become inoperative for causes unknown to him, and therefore automatically, as it seems to him, he sees or hears things under abnormal conditions of life. It is a proof of higher capabilities in him which he ought to cultivate. This is his heritage, and he must find out the means whereby he may raise the crop and claim the harvest. Divine economy has granted these proofs of occult powers in man at a juncture in the history of the Western countries, when materialism has well-nigh killed all faith in the higher aspirations of humanity. Similarly, belief in the life after death had become dead in this part of the world, and that meant ultimately, death to morality and religion; but Providence came to our help, and enabled some of the staunchest advocates of materialistic science to see with their naked eye some of the denizens of the world beyond the grave, the main object of such revelation being to enable men to believe in the life after death, and thus to prepare and qualify them to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, which they can only do through the grave and gate of death. But alas! the experience in the case of the Western world has

proved to be the experience which the Muslim Sufis dread — that of the Lure and the Pitfall. The people here have taken up with séances and spirit visits. To some of them it became a religion, and to others a profession. Swindling and cheating came in its train. The so-called mediums began to make a living by holding séances — I know there are some genuine mediums, and my remarks do not apply to them — some of them, indeed, are personally known to me, and I believe in their experience, though I may differ with their conclusions. But I wish that the so-called mediums could add a little knowledge to what we already possess as to the mystic side of human nature.

Before I go further, I should like to remove any wrong impression which my writings may leave in the mind of a Muslim Sufi, if any of them be among the number of my readers. To make the subject intelligible to the Western inquirer, I have referred to the electronic complexity of the human body and its evolution from electrons. Muslim belief, based on the Qurán, goes further than electronic condition in tracing not only human origin, but that of the universe. It is "*nur*" of Allah, out of which the whole universe arose. The English word "light," which we have to use in translating the Arabic word "*nur*", does not really suggest the same idea, but it comes near to it. God made us of His own "nur" —"light". It became clothed with thousands of coverings when it assumed earthly

form. The *"nur"*, had to pass into and through various stages before it became clothed in the human frame and made itself observable in the form of consciousness. This is our starting-point on the human plane. We have to sublimate animal consciousness into cosmic consciousness which borders on the Divine consciousness. If mind, allied to the human body, gives rise to animal consciousness, it will, in course of time, become evolved into cosmic consciousness, when its physical coverings will be refined into what I may call the covering of *"nur"*. Mind, a great creative agency, with the body of light around it and with all its earthly elements dead or dormant, could ascend even to the seventh heaven if it so desired, could see things at a distance of thousands of miles in a moment of time, could hear and talk over unimaginable spaces and could do all other wonders. These phenomena I have explained on a materialistic basis, I may say, to a certain extent. It is possible and within the bounds of human attainment. No wonder, then, if Muhammad, in his famous night ascension, could travel through seven heavens in the twinkling of an eye, and note some of the things therein. The earthly elements in the body of the Prophet which hampered the activities of the *"nur"* ("light") body in him, became inoperative for a time. The *"nur"* resumed the rapidity of its original movement. It could travel millions of miles in the same way, I may say, as the light of the sun does in reaching the earth,

the only difference between the two being that the latter does not possess mind in the evolved state in which it was in the body of Muhammad. On the next day, after the night of his ascension, his enemies, when they heard of it, came to him to test his veracity. In his night ascension, he had gone first from Mecca to Jerusalem, where he met the spirits of all the Prophets, and then he ascended the heavens. He had never in his life been to Jerusalem, and here was a chance for his enemies to test him, as some of them had visited that place. Abu Sufyan, one of the Meccan chiefs and an implacable enemy of the Prophet, called upon Muhammad and asked him to give some description of the remains of the Temple of Solomon, requesting him to count the pillars of the place, thinking by his succes or otherwise in so doing, to gauge the credibility of his narrative of the night ascent. The Prophet says, as we read, that the Temple, in its then existing condition, appeared before his eyes when the question was put to him by Abu Sufyan. The rest was a matter of course. He actually saw the thing before him, and could not help being accurate in his description. Muhammad's mind, with its light or electric garment around it, could go where it wanted to at once.

It has recently come within scientific ken that every organism is built up of the same material; trees, animals and men have the same elements and atoms as ingredients of their respective bodies,

and yet the said three species of organisms are quite separate and distinct from each other. Minerals as well have the same component elements. These ingredients undergo a peculiar process of growth, when in the vegetable kingdom. Locomotion and consciousness appear in them when they assume the form of flesh and the fleshy elements in different proportions; and, in a more refined form, they give birth to the human frame, with its consciousness, capable of wonderful growth. I leave aside other distinctive features. The ingredients in the tree are decidedly in a more refined form than in the mineral, and similarly the same when entering the animal frame become more refined still. A yet further refinement occurs in the human frame. The fact becomes clearer if we compare the brain congeries in different animals from the ape to the human. The matter is the same in the different brains, but the cells increase, which indicates refinement, so much so that the brains of educated people have more cells in them than those of uneducated men. An advanced mentality can detect slight shades of differences existing in things, while there is nothing of the sort discernible to an uncultivated mind. There has been a creation of new cells in the brain of the former, and that means further refinement.

If the refinement of elements can give them growth when they are in the vegetable kingdom, and locomotion and the initial stage of consciousness when they are in the animal frame; and still

further refinement creates discretion, self-control and wonderful capability of growth in consciousness, is it impossible that a further refinement yet of the ingredients in the human frame may serve to enhance the power of any and every sense possessed by us? The animal mind cannot keep pace with the human mind, though they consist of the same ingredients, the difference, of course, being the difference in refinement. The animal mind cannot look beyond the horizon of its vision, which again is confined to a very little distance, but the human mind, with its brain cells more and more refined, can pass into starry lands with the same ease as we walk in the streets of London. If it is true of mentality, why should it not be true of all other latent faculties?

## CHAPTER X.

# PSYCHIC RESEARCHES. PITFALLS AND LURES.

IT is gratifying to note that the West has become awakened to what it is pleased to call psychic research, and is interested in the development of the latent faculties in the human frame. This alone, indeed, should be the object of our higher pursuits. The present-day civilization, which may rightly be termed the Western civilization, consists, principally, in providing refined means for satisfying animal desires. Take London, for example, as one of the most characteristic centres of modern civilization. After all, it is Babylon on a higher scale. All its notions of happiness and comfort are simply such as arise from those instincts and passions which we possess in common with the animal creation; and the same may be said of the other capitals of the West. But, if there be other and higher capabilities in man, the object of his life should be to work them out; and religion, if it be indeed a Divine institution whereof the object is to lead us to success, can hardly be said to serve its purpose if it fails to put us on the right way to that goal. It is for us to strive to attain self-expression, and the Divine Revelation will guide us to

it. I need not refer to what other creeds say on the matter, but the Qur-án makes the upbringing of latent human faculties to their proper fruition the main object of Divine Revelation, and our order in Islam has claimed it for their sole occupation. Now I find this same spirit of a Muslim Sufi working in some of the movements which have lately appeared on the Western horizon—Spiritualists, "New-Thought"-ists, Christian Scientists, etc. But they are labouring under certain disadvantages which have given rise to many undesirable, and, I may say, time-wasting, pursuits, and the most miserable victims to it are the Christian Scientists. I may make a few observations as to them, later on. We have a store of guidance in the Qur-án and the sayings of the Prophet and the writings of other Sufis. There we have got accumulated and systematized records of the experience of generations of Muslim Divines and Sufis. In fact, we have a course chalked out before us, with its landmarks and "Cautions". The way of a Sufi is full of slips and pitfalls, but our mystic literature warns us against them in the clearest possible terms, so as to leave no mistake about it. The Sufis, with Al-Ghazzali among them, called these pitfalls "playthings." They entice man from his right pursuit, they amuse and entertain him, but they are of no consequence. *Kashf-i-Sudur* (the reading of the human heart) and *Kashf-i-Qubur* (the reading of the grave—the knowledge of the people in the grave)

are some of these "playthings." The Sufis regard them as dangerous pitfalls because they hamper progress. We are perfectly capable of working out our inner senses, and one of these inner senses will enable us to read another's mind; but will it make our life happy? On the contrary, it brings all our happiness to bankruptcy. Consider your own mind. How often does its tablet become polluted with ugly ideas and hideous schemes? What character would be given to us, if our friends came to know of them? They would shun us in a minute. All our social and civil relations would end in chaos if the secrets of the human heart were revealed. Similarly our reverence for the people in the past, which in some cases inspires us to follow in their footsteps, to our great advantage, would come to an end if we were enabled to read exactly how it was, and is, with the inmates of the grave. Yet, on the other hand, this "knowledge of the heart" and "the grave" is undoubtedly very alluring. It tickles our curiosity and is most fascinating; so much so, that it is apt to become the sole pursuit of our life, and thus to retard further progress. For this very reason, the Muslim Sufis regard these two acquisitions as playthings as well as pitfalls. The same thing is to be observed in all these spiritualistic circles. Very rightly, they have become disgusted with the Church religion. It has nothing of real Christianity in it. The Spiritualists had a real and true start. Their three basic principles—

universal brotherhood, belief in the life after death, and accountability for present actions hereafter —in the last mentioned of which they dissociate themselves from the Church belief in the Atonement—are worthy of a religion from God. Their object, therefore, should be to find and work out those principles whereby these objects may be attained. How are we to create fraternal relations among the different units of humanity? How make our life here, as well as hereafter, brilliant and successful? Thoughts of this kind should occupy our minds and time, if we believe in the accountability of actions. Is not the average Spiritualist of to-day occupied with the pitfall? In the family circle, or in their other meetings, they are always engaged in communications with spirits. Admitting all that has come to us on this score from the various mediums as true, it is none the less very commonplace knowledge, and the reason is obvious. Only those spirits could appear to us who are still hovering around the earth on account of some earthly things still existing in their frames, which have prevented them from being translated to higher regions. No wonder if some of the spirits are of a very low type, and if all the knowledge which we get from them is consequently trite and trashy. We are told by some of the séance-holders that we should not do anything to discourage their visits to us, but, on the other hand, in encouraging these visits, we damage their progress by keeping them attached to this earth, while

their real progress consists in their absolute detachment from their terrestrial connections. We, on our part, gain nothing, we only hamper our own progress. These séances may help to strengthen the belief of a novice in the world beyond the grave; but why should others who have passed that stage be interested in such matters? They should soar higher.

There are other pitfalls as well, more wonderful and therefore more fascinating than these spirit séances. But they, again, are only pitfalls, for example, the ability to see things and hear voices from a distance, sometimes hundreds of miles, to exert influence on minds of others, to produce mesmeric effect in inanimate matter, to make others see things in a form quite different from reality, etc. All these come of themselves in the way of a Sufi while pursuing his course. He becomes interested in them, enjoys them for a while, but he must leave them behind. How beautifully Al-Ghazzali has described it: "Your journey is long, full of ditches, rocks and mountains — sometimes seemingly unsurmountable for the horse you are riding on, but sometimes you find certain cool shades of orchards and lands of roses. Your horse may be allured by them, you, as well, may be tempted to take rest; but the fascination becomes too strong to allow of further journeying or the horse becomes too unmanageable and obstinate to go further. You may take rest and enjoy the beauties, but you must continue your journey. They are not beau-

tiful patches, they are really pitfalls, and the horse you are riding on is your carnal nature." I have put these ideas in my own language, and by "pitfalls" I mean everything of the kind that I have mentioned here. Once, some eighteen years ago, I wanted to secure something of great consequence to me, but it depended on the decision and discretion of another person in authority. In my midnight contemplation I was praying to secure this object, when all of a sudden I found myself standing on the verandah of the bungalow in which the gentleman lived. It was a strange phenomenon. I was cognizant at the time of the environment I was sitting in — I mean my own sleeping room with my family sleeping in the same room. I was on a mattress in a corner of the room, and the time was night; on the other hand, I thought I was standing on the verandah, and the time seemed to be in the afternoon. Call it my astral body or my own self with its double form; myself in the bedroom and my double on the verandah. The vision continued for a few minutes and passed away. On the following night the same vision was repeated at the same time as before, but now my "astral body" entered the office of the bungalow, where I saw the gentleman at his desk with heaps of papers before him. The third night came with the same experience at the same time, but now my papers were before him and I was pressing him to do what I wanted. Again the vision passed. The fourth night carried

me again to his room, and he wrote the word "sanctioned" under my orders. I have mentioned already that throughout these visions I was simultaneously cognizant of my real environment. Just at this moment my wife became wide-awake, and called for me. She had a dream to relate to me, in which she saw some person known to her, telling her that the orders would be given in my favour three days after. The third day came, and at the very time in my visions when I used to find myself in his room, my servant came and informed me of the said "sanctioned".

The experience occurred twice to other persons as well, and they had to do as I wished, but it came without my seeking for it. The only course that I adopted on the subsequent two occasions was contemplation and prayer in the early hours of the morning without exerting myself to send my "double self" to accomplish what was required, as I have described above. These experiences gave me a practical proof of the exerting of influence on another's mind in the desired direction, though he may be at some distance. I will explain later on how it occurs. I admit that it is not at present within the scope of my research, but it is not difficult to achieve. But will it contribute to the welfare and happiness of the world? There are, unhappily, many more chances and possibilities for the abuse of such powers. However well-meaning we may be, we are slaves to our wishes and desires. Our judgments are very seldom immune from

error, our nature lends itself to wrong as well as to right, and if in such circumstances we try to subordinate another's volition to our judgment, what an amount of harm will be done to society — even as regards those persons whose motives may be pure. But how many are there in the world whose motives are pure? On the other hand, what shall I gain by such achievements? One may amass wealth, but it never brings real happiness to man. And if there is to be a life after death, I shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

I think I have more or less explained from the materialistic point of view the mystery of certain phenomena which excite wonder in many eyes. It may be summed up shortly thus. That which excites our wonder is only a commonplace event seen under different circumstances and caused by a different agency. For example, a serpent possesses a charm for certain kinds of birds, such as sparrows. He attracts them towards him and eats them. A cat exerts a peculiar kind of influence upon a pigeon at some definite distance, so much so that the latter, with its eyes closed, becomes a willing prey to the cat if it is standing within the area of that influence. It is a common thing with these animals; but if a similar influence be exercised by one person on another person, it would be a matter of surprise and wonder. Let us assume, however, that man possesses in his body all the constituent elements that go to make up the bodies of the

serpent and the cat as well as those which build the physical frame of the sparrow and the pigeon. It is obvious that consciousness is merely a product of a peculiar combination of elements, and we possess in our human frame elements that will create the consciousness of the serpent or the cat. On the other hand, man possesses also within himself the elements requisite for creating the consciousness of a sparrow or a pigeon. Our mind is, in fact, a great creative agency. Would it, then, be a matter of wonder if some mind did actually by the exercise of its will cause its physical components so to operate as to create the serpent – consciousness in itself, and to be capable of exercising the same influence which a serpent exercises on a sparrow on another person of weaker temperament by creating the sparrow – consciousness in that person. This is the secret of many wonderworkers. They have learned to create within themselves a consciousness which belongs to another order of being, but it entails an evil as well. By doing so, they also imbibe certain evil characteristics pertaining to that order. Just as the magnet attracts iron, so also will a mind, which can manage to bring the magnetic elements in the human body into operation at a given time, draw other people to itself. Every man has within himself the elements of iron as well as those of the magnet. Iron has always possessed a species of magnetic consciousness, and if a man with such consciousness lacks in tender and high feel-

ings, it may well be on account of the iron elements in him. Many healers as well as others who lay claim to various powers not observable in normal conditions of life, evince some very undesirable traits of character. This apparent inconsistency is attributable to the same cause. They exercise powers belonging to other creatures, and imbibe the habits of these other creatures as well. For example, one who possesses the magnetic power of a serpent may well become a serpent in other ways too. The human mind is a repository of numberless faculties. Everything in the universe is contained in the human body, with a mind to rule over it. The Divine mind rules the universe, and the goal of the human mind is to reach that stage of development wherein it will rule the little universe of the human body just as the Divine mind rules over the great universe. Then it will learn to walk humbly with the Lord, and its possessor will become imbued with Divine attributes, as the Prophet Muhammad says, and will reproduce the Divine morals.

The task is very, very difficult, but man has been sent into this world to perform it. When we are born we possess an animal consciousness with the power to sublimate it into cosmic consciousness, which stands only next to God. This life is the life of preparation, a land to be broken and cultivated, but harvest will come to the sickle only in the life after death with its full abundance which is to develop the Divine mind from

the human. Those who do so in this world begin to train themselves, though imperfectly, on the lines of the Divine mind, thereby exciting the wonder of others. The drawback is the physical clothes with which the mind is covered. On death he becomes stripped of it and works freely.

This also gives an insight into the nature of life after death. Decidedly it is not a physical nature that is ours then. Even here in this life, physical nature becomes dead and gone in those who partake of the Divine nature, nay, I should say that no one can enter into those realms of which I am speaking unless he inflicts death on his carnal nature. Death is the passport. It may be through the working of the mind when man is alive, or it may be physical death in the ordinary course of nature. The life after death discloses a province which brings the whole universe under the working of a soul when that soul has given birth to the Divine mind. Physical nature is dead and gone the moment a man closes his eyes and leaves this world. But if the soul is still in an undeveloped condition, and has not become purged of the longings which are the offspring of its physical nature, it has to face hell. The want of means to satisfy that physical nature is one of the seven hells described in the Qur-án. Want of capacity to appreciate beauties of the life after death and inability to exercise its functions — which capacity and ability should have been cultivated in this life — is

another of the Qur-ánic hells. Painful treatment to cure the mind of its physical longings and enable it to evolve and make further progress is another species of hell. These are some of the hells mentioned in the Qur-án. In short, successful entry into life after death means the birth of the Divine mind at our death. When we are in an embryonic condition, we make preparation to make progress in life that is awaiting us on the earth. What we call child-birth is the name of death in the embryonic world; as we survive that death, so also we survive the death on this plane; we cannot make proper physical progress unless we enter into this world with healthy limbs and organs. The world on the other side of the grave is purely a mind world. If the mind enters into it purged of the nature of this world, and thus equipped for further evolution, he enters into the first stage of progress, called the "First Heaven" in the Qur-án, and as the evolutionary stages on each plane of development are seven, so we get the seven heavens of the Qur-án, but that is not the termination of our progress. The seventh heaven, when completed, brings man to the threshold of a further realm of progress. This is what the Qur-án says.

The reader will now understand something of the nature of life after death. It consists in the possession by the human mind of Divine attributes. The Western mind, stricken by materialism, cannot think of such a felicitous state, simply because it cannot be explained on materialistic

lines. God be glorified, Who came to help humanity. People began to observe some of the blessings of the life after death in certain of their fellow-men, though in a very insignificant degree.

## CHAPTER XI.

# THE NEW LIFE MOVEMENT.

THE ideal of the New Life Movement was foreshadowed by the Holy Prophet when he said the following:

*"God saith, The person I hold as beloved, I am his hearing by which he heareth, and I am his light by which he seeth. and I am his hand by which he holdeth, and I am his feet by which he walketh."*

The book of Genesis speaks of man as made after the image of God, and the above quotation from the words of the Founder of Islam come as a striking and eloquent commentary on the Biblical text. Read in conjunction, they not only reveal to us the measureless heights to which humanity may aspire, but the way also by which it may attain thereto. They put before us unmistakably the ultimate object of God-sent Religion. They indicate that state of spiritual perfection which is the culminating point of human progress—

> The one, far-off, Divine event
> To which the whole Creation moves.

The world, ever since the dawn of life, has received, time after time, in human form, an actual realization of this spiritual ideal. Muhammad, Moses, Jesus and many others of the blessed race of Teachers, were raised up to illustrate

through the perfection of their humanity the straight road to that high goal. They did their part well, and yet, although they were not free from the infirmities which are the lot of all mortals, and, through their words and actions, evinced their utter helplessness and absolute dependence upon God; those who profess to follow them have gone astray and mistaken the manifestation of divinity for God Himself. Words like "I do nothing of myself" (John viii, 28); "My Father is greater than I" (John xiv, 28); "Why callest thou me good? None is good save One, that is God"; "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?" show clearly enough that Jesus claimed no Godhead for himself, yet two thousand years have passed and a large proportion of mankind has not been able to free itself from superstition and credulity. Man is a worshipping animal. He must, perforce, bow down to a quality in others which he himself has failed to acquire, though it was, had he but chosen, within his own power. Others have been deified besides Jesus — Ramachandra, Krishna, Parasram, Buddha, Ezra, and many more, because they possessed what is the birth-right of every man, but has been forgotten by almost all, were honoured as God and accorded all the homage and adoration to be exclusively reserved for God. But for the clearest and most unequivocal utterances of Muhammad — the best and the last exponent of the unity of God — he, too, would have undoubtedly been worshipped n like manner. In the transcendental purity of

his teachings, in the miracles he worked and the marvellous reformation he accomplished, his achievements surpass those of the other guides of humanity, and in the face of these evidences, the authenticity of which have always stood above impeachment, a character like that of Muhammad could not fail to have been accepted as the prototype of the Father Himself (if others were taken as personifying the Son) by a credulous world. But his emphatic and oft-repeated warning that nothing be associated with his name, save only the title of the Servant and Messenger of God, preserved his followers from the degradation of confounding the creature with the Creator.

Jesus was not unique in his powers. He was one of the beloved of God, and, as such, blessed with Divine authority. "I cast out devils by the finger of God" (Luke xi, 20), he said when "he was casting out a devil and it was dumb"; and if we read his words in the light of the quotation with which this chapter opens — "And I (God) am his hand by which he holdeth" — the whole position is made clear. By the fulfilment of commandments (which is the literal rendering of Islam) man becomes the beloved of God and, as such, the possessor of things not possessed by others.

The words of these two prophets, however, are, if they are to be rightly understood, not free from difficulties. Even in the ranks of Islam — a religion proverbial for the strength and in-

tensity of its belief in the oneness of God, many have fallen into error. There have been some among the saints of Islam, that have appeared in almost every century for the last thirteen hundred years, and have shown signs of possessing the powers which had in the non-Muslim world, raised others to Deity, who have, in their turn, been deified by some among the ignorant Muslims. The quoted words, however, do not mean that these holy personalities become God; it refers to that state of self-abnegation wherein a man does not follow his own desires; when his own volition or discretion does not control his actions: in short, when he ceases to consult his own judgment and, like one who has no will, yields himself absolutely to God, becoming a lifeless instrument in the hand of the Lord to work out the will of the Most High. It is in this sense that his hands are the hands of God. Just as government officials are persons appointed for the purposes of government and yet not the government, so the hands of these men may be called the hands of God, but really they are not the hands of God. Their hand is in the hand of the Lord, and as long as it is there in absolute submission to the Divine will it will manifest the Divine power. Iron thrown into fire becomes like fire; it gives forth light and heath; and, in the eye of one who is not aware of the cause of this apparent transformation, it *is* fire; but, when taken out of fire it becomes the same cold black metal as before.

Every man has within himself a Divine element which, when he comes in touch with God, shines with Divine light. He takes on certain of the Divine characteristics. He works like God, speaks like God, and moves like God. He is the image of God, but not God. Every man takes him for God and hails him as God; but a Muslim cannot fall into this error. He knows that the moments of such Divine resplendency are of short duration, and must be followed by a return to every-day human nature with its weaknesses and shortcomings. Like Jesus, many, being men, have been accepted as God. They have excited the curiosity, the admiration and the wonder of multitudes and commanded their adoration. But it is necessary to compare the recorded infirmities of such a deified personality with the transitory manifestation of Divinity in him; and if the former be the predominating factor in his life, then he is not fire but iron in the fire.

Jesus lost his own personality. "Thy will and not mine" was the rule of his life; like lifeless machinery he was in the hand of the Great Worker, and thus, in the light of the above explanation, God worked in his person sometimes. Jesus did not work with the powers of God, but God worked through him, when and as He pleased. Jesus himself acknowledges that state of selflessness, when the will of man becomes subordinate to the will of the Most High and assumes the character of the Lord. "I judge and my judgment is righteous; because

I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John v. 30).

"Imbue yourselves with the Divine attributes." This was the exhortation of Muhammad to his followers, to the end that they might attain those heights which, despite their sublimity, are yet within the reach of all. Man, though tainted with the animal, was created for higher things. The powers of eating, drinking, and the procreation of young are not his exclusively. The lower animals do likewise; and it is, to say the least, unfortunate that modern civilization, after centuries of opportunity, should have, so far, failed to eradicate from man the baser part of the animal that is in him. The most that we have gained in the name of civilization would seem to be but refined means of satisfying the animal side of our nature, and that, when there is inherent in man a power which may set him above the angels. Nay, the very angels have been created to minister to man's needs; and, as the Qur-án says, "Man is vicegerent of God on the earth, but he must, imbue himself with the Divine attributes; he must possess limbs of God, must see with the eyes and hear with the ears of the Lord Himself. This is man's great heritage awaiting those who become beloved of God; those in whom the warring discords of human imperfection subdued by human effort, tireless and humble, give place to the Perfect Man. But how are we to reach that zenith of human perfection where individual man be-

comes a personal object of the love of God, clothed with Divine powers and manifesting Divine attributes? If the laws of affinity hold good everywhere, and if love draws love, we must, in the first place, love Him with all our heart and soul. Just as the electron is all-pervading in the physical universe, so does the Divine Love permeate the universe of the souls of men; but just as, also, the electron needs a conductor if it is to manifest itself, so is it above all things necessary that we possess that within us which shall attract to us the spark of Divine Love. "God saith" — so says Muhammad — "Whoso seeketh to approach Me one span, I seek to approach him one cubit; and whoso seeketh to approach Me one cubit, I seek to approach him two fathoms; and whoso walketh towards Me, I run towards him." Such is our God according to the teaching of Islam. His grace comes to us, but it comes as a consequence of our own actions. Love Him, and you will be loved by Him. Unless a man becomes shorn of all his volition and places himself in complete subordination to the Will of the Most High, he cannot attain that perfection whereby his very limbs and actions become as the limbs and actions of God Himself. He who said, "I cast out devils by the finger of God" (Luke xi, 20) does not compare his finger with the finger of God; he has renounced his own discretion in the control of his limbs, and has left them at the disposal of God; and in such self-anni-

hilation his finger has become the finger of God. In like manner the Qur-án speaks of the hand of Muhammad:

"And you did not smite when you smote (the enemy), but it was Allah who smote (viii. 17)."

Both Jesus and Muhammad, therefore, through their all excluding love for God, reached that state of self-effacement which enables man to imbue himself with the Divine attributes.

Love demands self-effacement. The true psychology of a true lover cannot better be denoted than by reference to two Arabic words, "Khullat" and "Hubb", which are equivalent respectively to the English words, "Friendship" and "Love". The former literally means "to make empty", and the latter "to fill". They reveal real process of love. We have first to empty our heart of what is already in it, and fill it with something new. A love-lorn heart has no room in it for any object of adoration other than the adored one; how much harder then will it be for us to find room for the love of God, if our hearts are full of ungodly things? We must empty it of these things and leave it empty for Allah. "There are some among men who take for themselves objects of worship besides Allah, whom they love as they love Allah — and those who believe are stronger in love for Allah" (Qur-án ii. 165). In these words man's love for God, which is the real basis of Islam, is declared to be stronger than all other ties of love and friend-

ship. Unless the heart is completely steeped in the thought of God, man cannot experience the blessings that God's love can give him; but reaching that stage he becomes imbued with Divine attributes and colours.

To this, the ultimate and supreme degree of love for Allah, did Jesus (and many other of the prophets) attain. Like a true Muslim, he cheerfully bore every hardship, and did not shrink even from the last ordeal of the Cross. But he did not die for our sins. His sacrifice was first for his own uplifting, and then in the way of example, for the uplifting of others. I fail to find a single word or phrase of Jesus to suggest that he bore the Cross to wash away our sins. On the other hand, "If you wish to be worthy of my name, bear your own Cross," he said, in effect, "Take up thy Cross and follow me". He was crucified that he might bring home to us the need for self-effacement, if we are to be worthy of the Lord. This is the final stage of man's love for God, in which the giving up of his life is of no account, if, in so doing, he gain the goodwill of the Beloved.

But the physical death is not in itself of actual significance. The sacrifice of flesh and blood is but a symbol of the sacrifice of the will which rules the flesh and blood. It is our task to kill our passions and desires, and the inclinations that arise from them. It is for us to subordinate our judgment to that of the One Most High. "Thy will, not mine" describes the Resignation

which means Islam; and, reaching that stage of absolute self-surrender, we become the object of the Divine love. The prophet Muhammad epitomizes the truth in one word, *Mutu qabla an tamutu*, which, interpreted, signifies "Die before you die". Detach yourself from all those things for which your soul and body conjointly and insistently crave, before your soul and body are parted.

## CHAPTER XII.

# MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF ANGELS. THE GUIDES IN SPIRITUALISM.

GOD is the best guide, and after Him the nature that He has created. He reveals His will to us by His messengers as well as through His working in the universe. The former medium plays a dominating part in the sphere of religion, while science deals with the latter. The teachers of religion give us certain laws of life, the final aim and object of which is to attain to such a state of spiritual growth as shall enable us to receive messages from our own Creator. There may be various ways of achieving the required state of spiritual growth, but there must be one way which is shorter than the rest, and if the Qur-án reveals it, as it claims to do, the finality of its revelation in this respect is established. Islam does not close the door on Divine messages to humanity.

> And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in Our ways; and Allah in most surely with the doers of good,

says the Qur-án (chap. xxix. ver. 69); and again:

> (As for) those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying; Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised.

We are your guardians in this world's life and in the hereafter, and you shall have therein what your souls desire and you shall have therein what you ask for:

An entertainment by the Forgiving, the Merciful (chap. xli. ver. 30—32).

In the last quotation we read of guardian angels, and before I go further I should like to say something as to the Muslim conception of angels. Everything in nature, even though it be in the form of dead matter, exhibits a sort of mentality, in observing the laws prescribed for the exhibition of its properties.

When brought under the conditions laid down for it, every form of matter gives out what is latent in it, and that with precision, and with a mathematical exactitude which is not discernible even in man with all his advantages of intellect and mentality. If the mind is a great guide, dumb and dead nature seems to possess stronger mentality than falls to the best of us sentient beings. Angels, in Muslim theology, are the sentient beings that work out the varied potentialities reposed in the diverse manifestations of nature. They act within prescribed bounds, and do not know how to violate them.

And whatever creature that is in the heavens and that is in the earth makes obeisance to Allah (only), and the angels (too), and they do not show pride.

They fear their Lord *supreme* and do what they are commanded (chap. xvi. ver. 49, 50).

The Arabic word for angel is in the highest degree expressive, bearing, in fact, two meanings: first, potentialities, and secondly, angels:

If, then, the potentialities of nature are without number, so too are the angels.

> . . . and none knows the hosts of *your* Lord but He himself; and this is naught but a reminder to the mortals (chap. lxxiv. ver. 31).

Every passion, every moral impulse, and every phase of spirituality is a potentiality, and has an angel to work it out whenever they come under conditions required for their revelation.

How stands it, then, with the human mind? Sometimes, without any association of ideas at all, we are impelled to do good. Some finer feeling in us, though dormant for the moment and without apparent reason for being aroused, becomes on a sudden active, and we are invited to do good. This impulse towards good, we Muslims ascribe to the angels. If we listen to such angelic calls, and follow their invitation, they in their turn are encouraged and begin to guard us against any evil step which we may be tempted to take. Thus every function becomes twofold. They invite us to good and warn us against evil. And further, if we are obedient to them, they become our guardians in the third stage. In this evolved stage of spirituality, man is visited by them; sometimes they appear to him in human form, but more often in vision. This may seem to others only a species of hallucination or trick of imagination, but it is a reality to those who are spiritually advanced. No materialistic explanation of such fantastic experiences as these can possibly affect

my belief, so long as the messages, or words of advice, come to us (as we believe them to have come) from angelic realms; for they are of real value in the moulding of our lives, and produce marvellous results. Services which angels render to those who have acted submissively as wards under their guardianship are the measure of their ministry. Man becomes master and they his ministers, his servants.

I have given a very brief account of the work of the angels. Before I go further something should be said as to the influence of spirits, other than angels, upon the destiny of man. If the various potentialities of nature are being worked out by corresponding mentalities which we call angels, those potentialities do none the less cause harm in the world when wrongly used; and if sometimes man becomes impelled to do wrong by some prompting which there is nothing in the outer world at the moment to suggest, we Muslims ascribe such evil experiences to certain sentient beings called evil spirits. By spirit here I do not mean the souls of the departed; I simply mean such beings as have direct and definite connection with those potentialities. Thus, if we receive good and evil inspirations, we ascribe them respectively to good and evil spirits; the angels being the former.

If in the spiritualistic movement angels are the guides and guardians, a Muslim cannot say anything against them; but if they come from "ghost-land," as it is called, the belief is not a

healthy one. Every spiritualist feels comforted when he claims to have the benefit of the guide; he lends a willing ear to its suggestions and suffers gladly the mutilation or stagnation of his own individual judgment. First of all, it is a very difficult thing to distinguish between the inspirations coming from a guide or angel and those arising from the working of our own subconsciousness. Subconsciousness sometimes remains at work for hours, and brings us to a certain conclusion. As we cannot ascribe this conclusion to any apparent cause or association of ideas, we at once assume that it emanates from a spirit or guide. We may not be able to detect the harm in it, and we may commit wrong. A Muslim cannot ascribe any inspiration of his to the angels, unless such inspiration is consistent with the requirements of morality, conscience and the Qur-ánic laws. I have known many spiritualists who would hesitate to do some good thing even because their "guide" had advised against it. Again, it is a recognized theory among spiritualists that only such departed souls return to visit those left on earth as have some imperfection in them by reason of which they are bound to this planet. Those of advanced spirituality, on the other hand, when they leave the earth, are forthwith translated to the higher regions and never return again. If this is the case, what guidance can we receive from those earthbound spirits? Nevertheless, it has, unfortunately, become a fashion with many to speak

of their "guide". Some are genuinely in earnest about it, but I fail to see how such guidance is ever likely to help man's growth. The very word "guide" creates a sort of psychology prejudicial to the spirit of independence and fatal to freedom of thought. There must be some reasonable limit to tutelage, but to remain always a ward is eminently undesirable. In Islam we are free from such conditions; for even our guardian angels become our ministers ere all is done.

## CHAPTER XIII.

# INSPIRATION AND REVELATION.

THIS leads me to say someting of Revelation from God. Divine inspiration is the lever of life; it changes its whole course, and brings it to the best end — a true guide in the time of utter darkness.

Man is the most helpless creature on God's earth. Animals have instincts which prompt their action, and in times of danger or difficulty tell them what to do, for their allotted course is short and their aspiration limited.

Human instincts, on the other hand, if such they can be called in the guide of impulses and passions, make life a constant struggle, when once they begin to rise above the ordinary animal level. Man's needs are endless and the track of his activities knows no terminus, yet he starts with some aim. There are a hundred and one ways of reaching the top of the hill, some circuitous, some zigzag, some far, some near, but there is one, and one only, which is straight; and all too frequently we find ourselves unawares on the wrong track. In every sphere of life the same principles apply: for each step of life we

need guidance and light. If we believe in God, Who than He can be a better guide? We need not go to Him for our daily sustenance; for there is enough material around us to enable us to fend for ourselves; and moreover, we have been equipped with limbs and joints for that very purpose. "Heaven helps those who help themselves" runs the saying of the West. To pray for sustenance, then, is an act of ingratitude for the Divine gifts, or at least it shows a brutishly inadequate appreciation of the blessings which, when properly used, can set us above material needs. Even those who do not pray for their daily bread get it all the same. Our only need is the knowledge of the right way of putting Divine gifts to their best use. Hence the Muslim prayer, "Show us the right path, the path of those who are the recipients of Thy blessings" — a prayer for Divine inspiration, which a Muslim says, before his God, in his five daily prayers. Man has been given everything. The whole world around him is his treasure-house, but he does not know how to use the treasures.

What was yesterday a mere waste in nature has to-day through scientific discovery been turned to a hoarded wealth. A path has been opened up whereby we are enabled to gain access to inexhaustible riches, and what is true of the material plane is true also of the spiritual plane.

A path is needed to the mountain-tops, a process for sublimating our animal nature into

the spiritual — the sublime. And yet the lower side of our being is neither to be depreciated nor despised. It is, as it were, a hoarded material of like nature to that for which we are striving, a material which, when once the true path is found, becomes an inestimable asset in building up the real humanity.

Just as we toil in laboratories to find out how we may utilize the metal in the bowels of the earth, so do we betake ourselves to some lonely place to commune with God and pray for the way to be revealed whereby the spiritual and moral metals in the seams of the mind may be rendered pure and unalloyed.

The book of God vouchsafes to us the needed guidance. "Those who strive in us We show to them our ways," says the Qur-án, and successive generations of Muslim Sufis and Divines bear testimony to the fulfilment of this promise of God.

How beautiful, how comprehensive, is the prayer: "Show us the right path"! To admit, to realize our ignorance, is the only path to knowledge. This truth dawned on the mind of Socrates centuries before the Christian Era. I may style it a Gospel of Knowledge which the Greek Prophet gave to the generation of sophists around him. To know is not to know, and, with this spirit, a Muslim is on his knees before his God, when he says, "Show us the right path." This is his prayer for inspiration.

Jesus perhaps meant the same thing when he prayed, "Give us our daily bread". "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," explains his prayer.

But his followers, unfortunately, preferred bread and butter to spiritual sustenance. They went after the kingdoms of this world, which the Master renounced when tempted; and it is this temptation that foreshadowed the condition of his Church to which his followers, acting in his name, have brought it to-day.

And has not the history of Christendom proved the truth of his reply to the tempter? The kingdoms of this world are the object of their hankering; and so it has been from the beginning. Are they worthy of the sacred name of him who cursed the devil? Daily bread, bread in the most material, sordid sense of the word, is their prayer. No wonder the gift of inspiration, which was given to the immediate followers of Jesus, of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles and in the narratives — metaphorical though the language be — of the day of Pentecost, disappeared so soon. If the followers of a religion become devoid of Divine inspiration and degenerate into fetishism, that religion cannot keep its hold on the human mind when reason begins to get the upper hand. Almost all the religions of the world, excepting Islam, have become victims to the demon of

Atheism. The best of Muslim rationalists have always fought against atheistic tendencies, and no generation of Islam has been without such people, who were blessed with Divine inspiration. For such inspiration is a link between God and man, and religion cannot hold its sway if that link disappear. In a word, the sole aim and purpose of religion, in its various laws and regulations, is simply to develop that innate human but often hidden capacity which enables the mind to receive the words of God.

For full seventeen centuries Christendom remained barren of it.

Everything Divine, which is and ought to be a common human heritage, was exclusively centered in one Personage, though Jesus stood, in almost everything, on common ground with the rest of mankind. It was Church sophistry that sought to make distinction between his human and Divine nature. Reason, however, arose to cast a doubt on the Church's exposition. Successive efforts at modernization kept the awakening rationality at bay, but the inevitable had to come, and Christendom in the end fell a helpless prey to Atheism.

The reaction has, however, taken place. The newly created movements are claiming human heritage in common with Jesus, and inspiration and revelation are claimed by man. But the reaction is not free from its characteristic drawbacks, imagination, hallucination, and various

random workings of subconsciousness, which are taken for inspiration. Every human being is undoubtedly capable of it, as is he capable of very many other things. Chance rhyming does not make a man a poet; neither does the seeing of a dream (that comes true), or an experience of a vision, prove a claim to inspiration.

## CHAPTER XIV.

# NEW THOUGHT AND HIGHER THOUGHT MOVEMENTS.

THERE is nothing new in the world. The Western world has become disillusioned, and is only beginning to see religious matters as they really are. Like a man suddenly awakened from a sound sleep by some imminent and pressing danger, who flies blindly to the first place of refuge that comes in his way, and regards it as a new haven, so is the condition of the Western mind, which, freed at last from the shackles of the Church, jumps to the very first thing which seems to assure it of some new light and illumination.

The "New Thoughter", or disciple of the New Thought Movement, thinks that he has made a discovery; that his mind is the Mind of God; and that he himself is a potential God. We are all Gods, think some of them, and, after all, it is not a bad idea; and if godhood becomes so common, Jesus, Ezra, and many other man-gods of the world, will very soon come to the common level of humanity.

The New or Higher Thought philosophy is, however, only a shadow of the Indian Vedantism in its advanced form, which teaches that every-

thing in the Universe is God. If a dog, cat, or pig can be accepted as God under Vedantism, why not man, who has been accepted by various persuasions as an image of God? The theory, though not without some leavening of truth, is, however, not altogether free from danger. In every stage of the development of religious thought, God has been taken to be the fountain of all good; all that is best in the morality of any age is focussed in His Name. If the human mind be, in every case, a divine mind, then wickedness and righteousness may pass alike for godliness.

Vedantism, in conjunction with the theory of Maya, has tended to weaken the sense of responsibility and to enervate human zeal and activity. The new ideas may do the same in the long run; seeing that the dangerous effect, for example, of such unqualified beliefs among the adherents of Christian Science is patent to all men.

Islam has, however, by teaching that everything has come from God and represents some phase of the Divine Mind, thrown a new and true light on the matter, and to make my point clearer, I shall have something to say as to the Muslim Sufi theory of Emanation, which was inspired by certain of the sayings of the Prophet and the Qur-án. "I love to express Myself," so says God in the words of the Prophet, "and I created the world." "God says," so says Muhammad, "Do not speak ill of the Universe, for I am the Universe."

These two sayings of the Holy Prophet solve the problem. God expressed and expresses Himself in the Universe; His various attributes became materialized and the world was created. The Sufis, like Mohy-ed-din Araby, hold that El-Ghaib — The Unseen, The Unknown — was the first attribute which became materialized in the beginning, and its colour was dense pitch-black, and out of that substance came light, which gave birth to all that is in the heaven and the earth. It is interesting to note that present-day scientific researches carry us to somewhat the same conclusion.

We are told that the first form of matter was very dark, and out of it everything comes; and that the said dark substance is the repository of most wonderful things, which gradually and inexhaustibly disclose themselves. We believe the same of God. Human knowledge cannot exhaust His Attributes, nor their working. The various forces or potentialities of Nature are only materializations of the Divine Attributes. They assumed their first material shape in the form of something extremely attenuated and very dark, which in scientific phraseology has been called Ether. In another stage of evolution it becomes nebula.

The Qur-án speaks of seven circular zones from the ethereal to the atmospheric strata, popularly called the Seven Heavens, which are the seven stages of evolution; and at each stage the first form of matter has become grosser and grosser

up to the atmospheric zone where it assumed the form of water; which, as rain, comes to our planet.

I do not here propose to deal with the creation of the earth; suffice it to say that the Qur-án and the sayings of the Prophet speak of some fiery gaseous condition of the earth in the beginning, which in course of time became water, which in its further development assumed the present shape of the earth.

The earth, it is believed in Islam, possesses all the potentialities of the Universe; in other words, the earth in itself is a miniature of the whole Universe and materializes all the known Divine Attributes of God. This is the interpretation of the sayings of the Prophet quoted above. "God says, Speak not ill of the Universe, for I am the Universe."

They were in the most refined form when they assumed the first form of matter — in the coarsest when they appeared in the form of earth. Now, again, began the process of refinement. It receives its start, as the Qur-án says, by the coming of the rains. Hidden forces of the earth are set stirring, and the various components of our planet, under a further materialization, assume the shape of various species of vegetation, from the products of which man was called forth, and everything appertaining to the earth accumulated in his body.

The human frame encloses the human heart, which in its form resembles the earth. It possesses

everything of the earth, but in the most refined form. In a word, material things become sublimated into conscious things. Just as the bowels of the earth contain its various minerals, so the human heart, in its recesses, finds place for emotions and passions, which in their cumulative form have been called human consciousness. In this way the Divine Mind, which began to express Itself in ether, and its very clothing, became grosser and grosser, and again began to near its original condition in the form of the human mind. The human mind, therefore, has the germs of the Divine Mind. It is a materialized form of the Divine Mind, but not itself a Divine Mind.

A dog or a pig in some form works out the Divine Will, but neither the dog nor the pig is God. To be more explicit — take the working of the sun. The sun, on the material plane, is the primeval source of everything. Iron has come out of the sun, yet it differs in its qualities from the sun. It is cold and black, while the sun exudes heat and light. Iron is from the sun, but iron is not the sun. Similarly, the human mind is from the Divine Mind, but not the Divine Mind. Herein lies the difference between the human mind and the other products of Nature. While different components of Nature materialize partially different attributes of God, the human mind accumulates almost all the revealed attributes of God, and is capable of giving expression to them. Just as gold or silver or some precious metal

rests in the bowels of the earth in the form of rocky ore, so these Divine Attributes lurk in the recesses of the human heart — we call them "passions," but they are passions in their first or natural condition. What we call lower or carnal passions are but the substrata of the Divine building.

Religion, if it be worth the name, must have come — has come — to convert the ore into burnished gold.

There is no hatred between man and his Creator that we should need a peacemaker to reconcile us to our God. But we do need a revelation that may enable us to arise from our nascent condition up to perfection. To imbue yourself with Divine Attributes, as the Holy Prophet says, is the ideal of a religious life. As the ore passes into various processes of purification and is purged of a large quantity of refuse matter before it becomes shining gold, or as a rugged uneven rock has to be subjected to the constant chisellings of a sculptor before it assumes the shape of a beautiful marble statue, so human consciousness cannot become Divine Consciousness by simply sitting in circles or concentrating its thought on this thing or that, nor by reciting a set of formulæ. That is mere farce. Sitting in a dark room where the holes and ventilators are plugged, to avoid any external agitation or disturbance, may help to secure concentration of mind; but what about the carnal passions, low impulses, and uncontrollable hankerings of humanity? Unless these are properly

plugged out, all our efforts at shutting out material distraction come to nothing.

Sometimes we succeed in securing concentration of mind, and thus are enabled to exercise our will power on others — which is the ideal, at present, of some of the modern Western religious movements — but it is not worth the time and labour spent on it. It is jugglery in a graceful disguise. I have seen wickedness and the gift of exercising the will-power of the mind going side by side; that is not the Divine Mind. Evolution means purification, and rising signifies detachment from lower things. Take the instance of any fruit — say an apple. It lies in the seed, it is buried in the earth, then it becomes a seedling, a tree with leaves, twigs, and flowers, and then fruit. In its final stage it has not the taste of leaves, wood, or clay, and yet it has passed through all these forms of matter. Similarly, germs of Divine Attributes, buried in the clay of human consciousness, have to pass through various stages of growth before they reach their perfection. Each stage of growth is different from the one before, leaving behind it most of the ingredients of the former stage. Imperfection at any stage means retention of something belonging to the lower stage. As an unripe apple has got the taste of the leaves in it, and a leaf at its budding has more of the nature of wood than it has at the stage when it gives place to flowers, so the human mind cannot reach to the precincts of the Divine Mind

so long as it retains the characteristics of its animal state. If, by sitting in circles, or by concentrating the mind on this or that thought, a person is able to get rid of the evil hankerings and tendencies that are specially to be observed in Western society, he is on the road to the goal.

Once I was invited to a dance given by the Spiritualists, somewhere in Fleet Street. I could not understand what spirituality and conviviality could have in common with each other; but curiosity carried me to the banquet, and there I was introduced to a remarkable medium, who had had the satisfaction of securing the conversion to spiritualism of a very well-known scientist. His emaciated, pale face, and his deep, dark, solemn eyes wistfully intent on far-off things, indicated some kind of ascetic pursuit in which the achievement of psychic power by mind-concentration is the aim and purpose. He had come alone, which seemed suitable enough, for he appeared, first and foremost, a solitary, an Eremite, for whom a lodge in some vast wilderness would have been the correct setting. He became interested in conversation with me, and we had much interesting and edifying discourse; but when the dance began, his face began to show signs of restlessness, his eyes, roaming over the large room, were searching everywhere for a partner; but alas! his appearance was against him; even his will-power, if he possessed any, failed to attain fulfilment of his wishes. He

could not, try as he would, will a partner for himself. After a few minutes, he lost all interest in the conversation, and had to request a friend to introduce him to some lady. The rest was a matter of course, and in a few minutes I found this same serious ascetic, who, a few minutes before, was talking of things behind the veil, drowned in the whirl of ordinary — I might almost say commonplace — joviality. I do not for a minute mean to imply that he was an impostor and deliberately and of set purpose deceived others. I can believe in some of his achievements; but he is a self-deluded man if he thinks that he is advanced in spiritualism. He may have abnormal powers of vision; he may be an excellent clairvoyant, but that is no proof that he is of any worth on the spiritual plane. By way of illustration, suppose a man has been brought up in a dark room which has certain curtains to keep out the strong sunlight; his eyes cannot bear the shock of sudden exposure to that sunlight, and he must needs go through various processes of discipline before his naked eye can fully face it; but if by accident, say, a gust of wind removes the curtains, and he stands suddenly in the full light of day, his eyes will become affected and lose their strength; yet he will see something, though in a disfigured form; he will describe to others in a closed room some new phenomena which he sees; he is quite genuine in his statement, but what he says is not a true account of the pheno-

mena which were there. It is for this reason that all knowledge in the form of messages or phenomenal observation is in the highest degree defective and unreliable, and has hardly contributed anything new to the knowledge of mankind. If some earnest spiritualists say that they see or have seen a departed soul, it is a possibility; but as they invariably clothe these spirits in earthly colours, it shows, on the most lenient interpretation, that the sight is not clear, and that an untrained eye has become blurred by being exposed to the strong rays of the sunshine — thus becoming disabled from seeing things in their real form. So their own imagination comes to their aid and makes up for deficiencies, and consequently these phenomenal observations smack overmuch of the earthly plane.

There is another drawback in the way of the Western mind. For centuries it has believed in a miraculous transformation of the human mind through certain beliefs. The Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, may have a deeper significance with advanced theology, but the belief that partaking of the Lord's Supper creates Christ in man, which means conversion of baser metal into something precious, relieves the mind of the hardships which otherwise would attend its spiritual growth. A „New Thoughter" may have lost his faith in his Church theology, but he has not divested himself of its legacies— "Believe in the Blood and all your sins are washed away" is still lurking in his mind in his new haven;

he still believss that by certain beliefs, accompanied by forms and ceremonies, he can become God incarnate.

Every man, in the Muslim belief, is a partial God incarnate. Within the four walls of humanity he is vicegerent of God on the earth; he is His image. But the statue lacks animation, soul. We are statues, but statues are stone, lacking mobility, lacking life. Muslim Sufis inspired by the Qur-án have laid down a course of life which is a little hard to pursue, but not impossible and quite within the reach of humanity.

It is interesting to note that the same things which are the boast of the new movement in the West, on the spiritual plane, are the things which we are enjoined to shun, on the ground that they are lures and pitfalls.

## CHAPTER XV.

## DIVINE MIND.

THE main object, if I may say, of Revelation from God to man is to enable him to create a divine mind within the human mind. All the messengers of God, raised up from time to time in different parts of the world brought the same message to humanity; and a religion which lacks the teaching that will enable its followers to attain this grand object is not worthy of the name.

The human mind, which arises out of the animal mind, is potentially capable of rising to that high stage. The divine mind is, in a word, the human mind minus the animal mind.

This does not mean that we must kill or eliminate the animal mind; for every institution — monasticism is one of them — that has for its purpose the mutilation of its animal nature, has proved to be disastrous to spiritual growth. Convents and monasteries have had more than their share of moral leprosy. If we believe in the Wisdom of the Creation, we only find fault with our Maker, if we seek to kill all instincts that link us with the beasts; for these too, are God-given gifts, and may not be dispensed with. Their control is the main object of our life on

earth — their control and development into the sublimest form which they are capable of attaining. The clay may be wrought into a beautiful image and the rough rock hewn into a magnificent statue. Man was made after the image of God, but the image must have life, as I said before. It must be clothed with Divine Attributes; but we cannot so clothe it, if we do not know what those attributes are.

Men run after miracles and healing powers — anything done abnormally is taken to be a feature of the Divine Mind. It may be so, but such qualifications are, in themselves, no index of the Divine mind; though they may be an appendix thereto.

How, then, can we find the Divine Attributes, and keep them before us, as an object of imitation? There are two courses only, open to us. Either we may read His Divine Attributes in the book of Nature; for that is the materialized expression of the Divine Mind; and the human mind contains within itself, in conscious form, the essence of the whole Universe, and is nearer to its original source — the Mind of God. We can learn concerning the Divine Attributes by the earnest studying of our own mind. It is to this effect that the Holy Prophet Muhammad to whom alone only the present world must look for enlightenment on this subject seeing that the records of the teaching of all other prophets are nearly lost — says, "He who knows his own mind knows his Creator".

But, has the world ever, without Divine aid, been able to study either its own mind or that of God? Consider the history of moral growth in the world. Are not the merits of the Middle Ages the demerits of to-day? Consider the conditions prevailing throughout the whole world at the time of the birth of the Prophet in Arabia. Evil was rampant and virtue extinct; but the worst characteristic of that time was, that certain evil acts, which to-day are universally accepted as sheer wickedness, were then, in various parts of the world, regarded as forms of piety. Things forbidden to others, were not only lawful, but actual virtues, if done by the priestly class.

In India, Persia and Arabia, the same order prevailed. Truly, the beauty of those days, is the ugliness of to-day. But we need not go to so remote a period in history. Even now, the Western mind is only just awakening to the curse of drink. The Church of to-day cannot dispense with the wine in the sacrament; but Islam, on the contrary, has always declared drink to be a sin, and has thereby saved a large portion of humanity from its doom.

It is therefore, difficult, depending only on our own exertions and our own thought, to come to a right knowledge of Divine Attributes. If our aim be to sublimate the human into the Divine Mind, by clothing it with Divine attributes, we must look to God for help. The study of nature will doubtless prove a great help to

us at this stage; it will be an excellent test for finding out the truth of that which is preached to us in the name of Divine revelation. For example, the Church theology speaks of a new Epiphany. We are told that God revealed Himself in quite a new way at Calvary some two thousand years ago. Prior to that time, he had saddled humanity with law, and made man's salvation contingent on its fulfilment. He gave the religion of Commandments and Obedience to man for his regeneration, but the Divine Scheme failed and it became necessary to find a new one, if humanity was to be saved. He saved us through the Grace and Blood. Such a belief, we are told, transmutes base metal into purest gold.

If Nature, as I said before, is an expression of Divine Attributes, then surely it is the Old Testament — the Religion of Commandment and Obedience, and not the New Testament, a Religion of Grace through Atonement — that obtains everywhere in the realm of nature. Action and not belief, brings us in tune with Nature. I admit that beliefs are the mainsprings of action; but beliefs, unless translated into actions, are dead things. If actions only, can win us salvation, belief in atonement is beside the point, and vice versa; so that Luther, from his point of view was not wrong when he preached that belief obviates the necessity for actions.

The study of nature, including the human mind, is a great help towards arriving at the true know-

ledge of Divine attributes; but we shall have to look to God Himself for the revelation of Himself to humanity; and He has so revealed Himself from time immemorial.

Christian Science, New Thought and all other Western religious movements of the day hinge upon one pivot — to create the divine mind in the human frame — but we can never succeed in this without a true knowledge of the Divine character. The Holy Prophet has said the same thing, 'Imbue yourself with Divine attributes'. But how are we to know all these Divine attributes? "New Thought" speaks of 'Right Thinking', but what does this phrase mean?

If the object of our meditation ought to be things that are right and noble in popular estimation, it is not a safe way to reach the goal. The best of to-day may turn out to be the worst of to-morrow. If God speaks and has revealed Himself to humanity from time to time, why should we not go to Him to enlighten us concerning His Attributes? I fail to find any light upon this subject in all the literature of these new cults. They are more or less philosophies; they have come partially to the truth, but the image they have set up has feet of clay.

I wish the prophets of these new movements could have produced something to guide us, based upon the revealed words of God. They may stigmatize such a demand as "orthodoxy", but can they show anything in the workings of God which ever needed modernization? The ways

of God are unchangeable, and His laws unalterable, as the Qur-án says, and every atom in Nature bears testimony to it.

Human ways may become archaic and old-fashioned, even as human judgment is always in some degree defective, but God's ways are eternal, even as He Himself is eternal, and therefore, to speak of them as merely orthodox, is rank blasphemy.

Sitting in circles and praying in a silence which is broken from time to time by a few words of guidance by one among the circle, is only an imitation of the Muslim form of prayer, in another way. Every Muslim is supposed to say his prayers five times a day, a portion of the prayer is performed in the congregation, which is led by one person, who says a few words from time to time to lead the others through various movements and gesticulations, which, in a way, relieve the mind of the monotony induced by maintaining one posture and intensifies feeling. The other portion of the prayer, consists of silent meditation, the greater portion of which is the contemplation of certain Divine Attributes. These solitary meditations are chiefly recommended in the early hours of the morning. The Holy Prophet says: — An hour's contemplation and study of God's creation is better than a years adoration.

Here again the object of meditation is the Divine Attributes. A Muslim keeps the requirements of these attributes before him, and tries

continually to find out how far his own life and conduct are in accord with them; and if he falls short of them, what means he should adopt to make his defect good.

And here, perhaps, a brief analysis of the whole Qur-án, will not be out of place. God is its theme. Open it at random and you will find reference to God on every page. The book may be divided into seven parts. First, God and His Attributes; secondly, references to various phases of nature in order to elucidate and explain these attributes; thirdly, virtues which are actions in imitation of those attributes—in other words, actions in tune with the Divine Attributes are virtues, and actions contrary thereto, are sins, which form the fourth part of the book. The fifth part deals with the laws and injunctions, by obedience to which, we are enabled to achieve these virtues, and to avoid evil. The sixth part deals with the lives and deeds of those who have succeeded in clothing themselves with Divine attributes—Prophets, Messengers of God and other righteous people—and of those who went astray and failed—people of iniquity and wickedness. Lastly, the book speaks of the life after death, where we shall have to reap as we have sown in this life. Those who can qualify themselves for further progress by purging their human mind of its animal nature will enter into a realm of bliss, called Heaven. In each stage of evolution on every plane, there are seven stages, to which the Qur-án makes

frequent reference. Six are evolutionary stages, and the seventh, is that of perfection in each order. This last stage of every order becomes the first stage of the higher order immediately next succeeding. As for instance, the Book speaks of some seven embryonic stages and the findings of modern science are in complete accord with it. The seventh stage gives birth to consciousness, which the Qur-án styles "another creation". The Book also describes seven steps whereby human consciousness may be lifted up to the stage when what is really noble and good in it begins to come out. These fourteen stages of physical and moral growth have been narrated in the following verses which speak first of moral growth. The moral perfection as the quotation says, ripens our consciousness into fitness for spiritual growth. The physical nature giving birth to the moral one and the latter to be sublimated into spirituality.

> In the Name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful.
> Successful indeed are the believers.
> Who are humble in their prayers.
> And who keep aloof from what is vain.
> And who act aiming at purification.
> And who guard their private parts.
> Except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for surely they are not blameable.
> But whoever seeks to go beyond that, these are they that exceed the limits.

And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenants.
And those who keep a guard on their prayers.
These are they who are the heirs.
Who shall inherit the Paradise; they shall abide therein.
And certainly We created man of an extract of clay.
Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place.
Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators.
Then after that you will most surely die.
Then surely on the day of resurrection you shall be raised (chap. xxiii, ver. 1—16).

No man can go beyond this in his earthly sojourn; but when a man dies, having achieved such perfection, he has seven stages more for progress, which are the seven heavens of the Qur-án. The seventh heaven again is not the end, for the progress of the human mind is continuous, until at last it merges into the Divine consciousness. Man mind cannot become God-mind. No man has ever lived for whom this could be claimed. Christ is often quoted as the expression of God-mind, but words without meaning bring no consolation, and if Jesus is to be taken as representing Christus, his record, un-

fortunately, does not bear out the claim. The biblical narration of the Master does not give much credit to him. If we Muslims have never believed in the genuineness of the Bible—and the world largely endorses our belief in this respect—it is because its record does not suggest a picture which meets the Muslim demands from a Prophet and Messenger of God. Inasmuch as Jesus is one of our own Prophets, our disbelief in the genuineness of the synoptic writings can be readily understood. We believe that Jesus left the world with a mind free from the lower passions and equipped with Divine attributes. So we believe of all other Prophets.

In short, we have first to discover the Divine Attributes — and then pursue a course of life which may enable us to come near to them. The Qur-án supplied this need as no other book has ever professed to do; and it is indeed for this one reason — to supply this need, that the Word of God came to men. Every member of the blessed race of the Prophets from Noah up to Muhammad — the peace of God be upon all of them — with Jesus as one of them, brought the same knowledge of Divine attributes to the world, and the way in which they may be achieved by the human mind; but the world could not preserve all these messages in their original purity. The Qur-án was revealed, last of all. It recapitulates all that was given before, and inasmuch as more favourable circumstances have preserved it and brought it

down to us intact, it has dispensed with the need for any further revelation.

I do not here propose to give a detailed account of the Divine Attributes set forth in the Qur-án; but I will speak here of the first four, which are found in the opening chapter. These four attributes stand as the root of all other attributes named in the Qur-án, which are 99 in number, which I give in the coming chapter. We know very little of God. Our whole knowledge hardly exceeds the limits of these 99 Names; and it is remarkable to know that almost all the natural laws discovered by scientific research, are but the manifestations of one or other of these attributes.

We recite these four Names, especially in our five daily prayers, and meditate upon them, and I beg of the readers of my book, especially those who are interested in these new religious movements to consider if indeed their lives fulfil the requirements of these four Names, for if they do not, they are simply groping in darkness, and all their power of healing and wonder-working is a mirage, vain, illusory. I quote here a portion from the sermon which I delivered on the occasion of a Muslim festival — Eid-azha — at the Mosque, Woking.

The opening chapter of the Qur-án discloses the four attributes of Allah. He is Rabb-ul-alameen, the Creator, Maintainer, Nourisher and Evolver of all nations. In His providence He knows no difference between man and man, no

distinction between race or colour and no partiality for a creed or a class. His blessings are open to all and upon all. "King and Ruler of the Universe" are also His attributes. Let those, then, who are the rulers of the world, follow Him in this first attribute mentioned in the Qur-án and so secure the peace of the world without the mockery of Genoa and the hopelessness of the Hague Conference. Walk humbly with the Lord, Who makes no distinction between race and colour, and you will not only receive allegiance, but—and I say it advisedly—something akin to worship from the nations over which you rule. To-day you call a nation bandits or cutthroats, and to-morrow you go and shake hands with them as gentlemen, simply to serve your political ends and to bring another nation to dust. That is not the way to restore peace on the earth of the Lord on High. I may remind you of something from your own book which may help you to solve the difficulty that faces you. In your morning prayers, if you are Christians, you kneel down and say "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Could that Will be done on earth if man stands in the way? or is it difficult to read the Will of the Lord as it is in Heaven?

If the Most High in Heaven can rightly be regarded as the Ruler and Governor of the Universe, is it difficult to find out His Will? You may say that the Nigerians or the Abyssinians belong to inferior races, but bring your brain

and the Nigerian or Abyssinian brain under microscopic examination — compare your limbs, joints and muscles with his, and you will find that Allah, the Ruler of the Universe, has made no distinction in his gifts between you and those who are, in your eyes, the lowest of the human race. The Nigerian or Abyssinian is equal to you, but the economic and political pressure of his wellmeaning neighbours has reduced him to the degradation which they despise.

It is immaterial to a Muslim whether the government of a nation belong to A or B. It is like the sunshine, not confined for good to any place. But if a nation desires to secure the stability of her rule over other nations, then let that nation observe the great and divine moral of which I speak. In that case, the distinction of nationality will disappear and the ruler, though of a different colour, will be one with his people.

The second attribute of Allah is Rahman, Who out of His beneficence, provides for the needs of others, whether they deserve His care or not, and a ruler in striving to reproduce within himself this divine morality, should provide for the needs of his subjects in such a way that they may lead lives that are happy and comfortable. Look at the resources of Nature—how bountiful and abundant, they are, and all these should be worked out, developed and used by the ruling class for the benefit of the subject. You complain about the unrest in India—you are wearied by it—you look on it with a sort of boredom not unmingled

with disgust—but India is a country, very rich in Nature's gifts, a country of almost limitless resources, and yet it is a country where a very large number of the children of the soil are living on the verge of starvation—where people are existing on a few shillings a month. I was here in England in 1918, when the influenza epidemic was playing havoc throughout the whole world. It made its appearance in this country as well, and the then Government was given notice by the public to combat it. Funny as the demand was, yet it proved to be successful. Every scientific means was resorted to and the epidemic was stamped out with comparatively little loss of life. But have you ever thought of India? India lost within three months three millions of souls, equal to the number of all your casualties in the whole war. A ruler, if he seeks to follow the attributes of God, should, out of his beneficence, take every measure, hygienic or sanitary, what science can devise, so that the good health of his people may be secured and maintained.

Rahim is the third attribute of God, the Merciful Allah, Who gives a hundred-fold reward for one action of man. You put one seed in the earth and you receive a hundred-fold. The whole strife between capital and labour would come to an end if the employers would, so far as it lies in their power, in this respect, imitate their God. The fourth attribute is Maliki-yaumiddeen — The Master of the day of judgement, Who rewards us according to our merits and demerits;

our merits recieve manifold rewards, but our mistakes recieve only the like punishment. They are often forgiven but, if punished, it is always for our correction. Divine forgiveness or punishment, as the attribute suggests, come to work only for our rectification.

## CHAPTER XVI.

# CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS.

THE question of good and evil, and more especially the genesis of the latter, is a great puzzle, and any misappreciation of the subject cannot fail to have a disastrous effect on human character.

The story of the Fall of Adam with the theory of sin innate in nature as its corollary — and, similarly, the theory of the God of goodness and God of evil, supposed to have been taught by Zoroaster, are not only discreditable to our Maker, but tend to weaken man's sense of responsibility, reducing him to the role of automaton, or a helpless, passive, unconsenting instrument of evil.

The Qur-án has, however, simplified the problem. God, as the Book says, is the Source of all good; the mishandling or abuse of things creates evil.

Opium and arsenic, used for the purposes for which they have been created, are blessings of God, but their abuse makes of each a curse.

I have stated elsewhere, that everything in the world is the materialization of Divine Attributes. I have also said that to do good means to do something in consonance with the requirements of these attributes, and that anything contrary to them is evil; so says the Qur-án in the fol-

lowing words: — "And Allah's are the best Names, therefore call on Him and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His Names, they shall be recompensed for what they did" (chap. vii, ver. 180).

In the following list, the reader will find the said Holy Names as mentioned in the Qur-án with their English translation. It is very difficult and I may say, next to impossible to give a proper and adequate rendering of these Arabic names, for Arabic words are very rich in their meanings.

1. *Hoo*, He. 2. *Ar-Rab*, The Creator, The Maintainer, The Nourisher, The Upbringer. 3. *Ar-Rahman*, The Beneficent, The All-Giver. 4. *Ar-Raheem*, The Compassionate. 5. *Al-Mâlik*, The Master, The Owner. 6. *Al-Malik*, The King. 7. *Al-Quddús*, The Holy One, The Pure One. 8. *As-Salâm*, The Author of Peace, Free from Defects. 9. *Al-Maumin*, The Granter of Security. 10. *Al-Muhaimin*, The Guardian over All. 11. *Al-Azéez*, The Ever Mighty. 12. *Al-Jabbâr*, The All-Compelling; the one who brings everything under His Will. 13. *Al-Mutakabbir*, The Possessor of All-Greatness, Glory and Dignity. 14. *Al-Khâliq*, The Creator, The Combiner. 15. *Al-Bâri*, The Maker, The Moulder. 16. *Al-Musawwir*, The Fashioner. 17. *Al-Ghaffâr*, The Great Forgiver. 18. *Al-Quahhâr*, The Great Dominant. 19. *Al-Wahhâb*, The Great Bestower. 20. *Ar-Razzâq*, The Great Provider. 21. *Al-Fattâh*, The Great Opener. 22. *Al-Aleem*, The All-Knower. 23. *Al-Quâbiz*, The Straightener, The Chaser. 24. *Al-Bâsit*, The Amplifyer, The Opener. 25. *Al-Khâfiz*, The Abaser. 26. *Ar-Râfi*, The Exalter. 27. *Al-Muizz*, The Honourer. 28. *Al-Muzill*, The Debaser. 29. *As-Sami'i*, The Ever Hearer. 30. *Al-Basir*, The All-Seer, The Observer. 31. *Al-Hakam*, The Judge. 32. *Al-Aali*, The Just. 33. *Al-*

*Lateef*, The Knower of Subtleties. 34. *Al-Khabir*, The One who is Aware of Everything. 35. *Al-Halim*, The Clement, The Meek, The Forbearer. 36. *Al-Azeem*, The Owner of Greatness. 37. *Al-Ghafir*, The Pardoner. The Suppressor of Evil Propensities. 38. *Ash-Shakoor*, The Great Grateful. 39. *Al-Aala*, The Most High. 40. *Al-Kabir*, The Ever Great. 41. *Al-Hafiz*, The Ever Preserver. 42. *Al-Muqit*, The Ever Maintainer. 43. *Al-Hasib*, The Reckoner. 44. *Al-Jalel*, The Ever Glorious, The Benign. 45. *Al-Karim*, The Ever Bountiful. 46. *Ar-Raquib*, The Ever Watchful, The Watcher. 47. *Al-Mujib*, The Ever Hearer of Prayers. 48. *Al-Wâsi'h*, All-Comprehending One, The Granter of Felicity and Facilities. 49. *Al-Wadood*, The Loving. 50. *Al-Hakim*, The Ever-Wise. 51. *Al-Majid*, The Glorious. 52. *Al-Bâis*, The Opener of the Tomb, The Resurrector. 53. *Ash-Shahid*, The Witness. 54. *Al-Haqq*, The Truth. 55. *Al-Wakil*, The Guardian, One who has charge of things, One who can be trusted upon for the charge of Affairs. 56. *Al-Qawi*, The Mighty. 57. *Al-Matin*, The Firm. 58. *Al-Walii*, The Friend, The Patron. 59. *Al-Hamid*, The Ever Praiseworthy. 60. *Al-Muhsi*, The Accountant. 61. *Al-Mubdi*, The Great Beginner. 62. *Al-Moiid*, The Restorer. 63. *Al-Mo'hyi*, The Life-Giver, The Quickener. 64. *Al-Momit*, The Causer of Death. 65. *Al-Haiy*, The Ever-Living. 66. *Al-Qayum*, The Self-Subsistent. One who Sustains others. 67. *Al-Wâjid*, The Finder of Everything. 68. *Al-Wâhid*, The One. 69. *Al-Ahad*, The Alone in his Attributes. 70. *As-Samad*, The Eternal, The One on whom all depend, and who depends on no one. 71. *Al-Qâdir*, The Powerful. 72. *Al-Muqtadir*, The Possessor of every might and power. 73. *Al-Muquadim*, The Foregoer. 74. *Al-Muakhkhir*, The Ender of Everything. 75. *Al-Awal*, The First. 76. *Al-Akhir*, The Last. 77. *Az-Zâhir*, The Without, The Manifestor, The Essence. 78. *Al-Bâtin*, The Within, One that creates essence of thing. 79. *Al-*

*Wâli*, The Governor. 80. *Al-Mutââli*, One who is above others. 81. *Al-Barr*, One of Great Goodness. 82. *Al-Tawwâb*, The Great Forgiver. 83. *Ar-Raoof*, The Lenient, The Kind, especially in warding off trouble or difficulties. 84. *Mâlikul-Mulk*, King of All Kingdoms. 85. *Zuljalál-Wal-Ikrâm*, Lord of Awfulness, Glory and Honour. 86. *Al-Muqsib*, The Equitable. 87. *Al-Jámi*, The Gatherer. 88. *Al-Gani*, One who is above every need, All-Sufficient, The Rich. 89. *Al-Mughni*, One who makes others above their needs. 90. *Al-Muati*, The Giver. 91. *Al-Mâni*, The Preventer. 92. *An-Nafé*, The Propicious, The Benefiter. 93. *Az-Hadî*, The Guide. 94. *An-Noor*, The Light. 95. *Al-Azli*, The Eternal. 96. *Al-Bâqi*, The Survivor. 97. *Al-Wâris*, The Inheritor. 98. *Ar-Rashíd*, All-guidance. 99. *As-Saboor*, The Long-Suffering, The Patient.

Besides these 99 Names, the Muslim Divines have deduced many other Names from the description given of God in the Holy Qur-án, for instance, Al-Muhit, The All Pervading—The Bringer of every other thing within the province of His Action; Ash-Shafi—The Healer, The Giver of Health; Al-Jamil, The Beautiful, and so forth.

The reader will find that all that has been achieved by the human mind as good noble and sublime, are comprised within the scope of these Names; all forms of righteousness and virtue are but the shadows of these Divine Attributes. All laws that regulate human conduct for the health and well-being of society are consequent upon them. All that we need, has been foreshadowed in them. On the other hand every conceivable form of evil is but an antithesis of

one of these Names. I may go further and say that all the forces of Nature, discovered by science are merely the working of these very attributes. Space forbids to dwell further on this aspect of the subject at the present time; suffice it to say that the whole working of the Universe, including human actions and human feelings in their desirable form are the manifestations of these Names.

To lead the best life on any plane, physical, moral or spiritual, will therefore be to keep ourselves in tune with God and His Attributes.

If the laws of nature may be taken to be, as I believe them to be, the working of these Attributes or Names, then to obey these laws is to obey God. To be in tune with nature will simply mean being in tune with God.

The securing of all that is beautiful and sublime will depend upon our affirming, through our actions the significance and requirements of these Holy Names, and giving practical denial to all that is contrary and antagonistic thereto.

The Muslim formula of faith has been based upon this principle; and the life, which the Qurán prescribes for a Muslim to follow, has been mapped out on these lines. The formula runs thus: Lá-Illa-ha-illallah — No other object for obedience or adoration but Allah. It consists of two parts; in one a Muslim denies, in the other he affirms something.

Allah, as I have shown, is the Source and Repository of all that is good, and therefore,

everything beside Him is evil. The recital of the formula, therefore, means the affirmation of good and the denial of evil.

Open any book of Muslim mysticism, and the first lessons given to the initiate are the lessons of Ithbát — that is, affirmation — and Nafi — negation. The initiate, besides his daily prayers, sits in a solitary place, in the quiet hours of the night, recites the formulae, and tries to realize that the spirit of Allah is all around him, and anything but Allah has no existence. Everything around him is working in consonance with the Will of the Lord, and whatever appears to be adverse to that Will is only illusion and misplacing or abuse of good.

Remember too that the recital of certain words by way of accompaniment to our thoughts, intensifies the feeling. You may meditate for hours on a thing, but until you articulate it, concentration will be less easy. While repeating the formula, the initiate is required to imagine a line which commences from his navel and goes direct to his brain, through his left ear, passing thence through the brain and coming out of the right ear, passing round the lungs and going direct to the centre of his heart. The heart is taken by the Muslim divines as the seat of Divine Love and the tabernacle and throne of God — while the stomach is the seat of lust and desire, which are the root of all evil. The stomach represents animal nature, but the heart, when purified, gives birth to divinity in man. The initiate,

thus repeating the formula, puts from him everything un-Godly, that comes out of the stomach or other vital organs of the body. The heart he reserves exclusively for Allah; which he affirms when reciting the latter portion of the formula. In order to make the mind free from disturbing influences, the initiate begins this recitation in a loud voice, with his eyes closed. This is called Zikr-i-jahar, and its object is to make the ears attentive to the words and thus to keep them away from any other distracting thought.

Some foolish European travellers call such an initiate a 'howling dervish'. However, when the initiate secures the power of fully concentrating his mind on Allah, he is taught various ways of meditation, called Zikr-khafi—silent meditation. It is a vast subject and really requires a volume to itself. The main end and purpose is to fill the heart with God, which means to engross the mind with the various attributes of God, so as to leave no room for anything besides Him. These contemplative exercises must be translated into daily actions and words.

After some time, when the mind of the initiate has become accustomed to these meditations, he is advised to concentrate on one of the attributive Names of God. To this end, he recites the same formula, but when the word Allah, which he has to affirm, comes to his lips, he keeps that particular attribute as the connotation of Allah in his mind; and when in denying, he says La-illaha, he reads in the word Illah, every-

thing contrary to the said attribute. For examble, if a person stands in some particular need which comes within the purview of one of the attributive Names of Allah, his meditation will be as follows. He will keep that particular attributive Name as the attributive of Allah before his mind, and deny what is contrary to it. For example, El-Shafi means Health Giver and anything in the form of illness goes against tho working of that Name. In his recitation, La-illaha ill-Allah, he has not only to negate illness, and to affirm Allah in the manifestation of His attribute El-Shafi—Health-Giver, but also he has to realize that the Divine Essence, in its manifestation of health-giving, is pervading the whole universe, and that illnesses are the outcome of the abuses of the law, which is only the working of the said Name and that their abuses must be brought to an end, not only through meditation but through action as well.

We cannot deny the existence of evil, but we attempt to negative its existence by certain actions, and these times of contemplation give us the stimulus and vision that is needed. Is not our friend the Christian Scientist walking humbly in the footsteps of a Muslim? And the founder of the said movement has borrowed the principle from Islam as the two zikrs—Jahar and Khafi—loud and silent contemplation—have been in vogue for more than a thousand years among the Muslim Divines.

I cannot understand the propriety of the name which this new movement has chosen.

Negation of evil is not submission to evil. To conquer through submission to evil, is no doubt claimed to be a Christian verity, which stands in quite a different category from that of the Christian teaching.

Assertion gives a completely different psychology from submission; for in submitting to a thing you admit its existence, but through affirmation and denial you deny its very existence and assert something contrary to it. For example, a person is ill, and takes no medicine to cure his illness; but on the other hand, creates circumstances to aggravate it. This would be true submission to evil and in harmony with the saying of the Master:—"That ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also". But if a person, not only does not deny the existence of illness, but sets his will to fight against it, he may or may not take medicine, but this is not submission.

Whether we take medicine, or assert our will power against an illness, is immaterial. In both cases we are attacking the illness and trying to eradicate it from our system; we are active and not passive. Therefore it is a misnomer to call the new movement "Christian Science".

Christian Science, like the New Thought movement, has nothing in common with the Christian religion as taught by the Church. Their truths must have been taught by Jesus as he was a messenger of God, but the record of his teaching, as it exists, does not support them. It is only

as a means to mitigate the prejudice against the movement that the word Christian or Church, is introduced into their literature; in all other respects they are simply the off-shoots of Islam, and more especially, in the case of Christian Science, which has begun exclusively on Muslim lines, of affirmation and negation. The only difference arises thus—A Muslim, say in the case of a person who is ill, does not meditate upon health and illness in their abstract forms, but affirming the former and putting away from him the latter, he turns his mind towards God, keeping His Attributive Name—El-Shafi—Giver of Health—before his mind and denying all those agencies creating and tending to create illness. He does not make his health his God, but he looks to God, Who is the source of health. Here is, indeed, a vast difference. Besides, a Muslim divine, while contemplating the said attribute, will consider all the ways of the Lord, which He has created to preserve health in the world, including the use of drugs as well. He will think, too, of all those factors which give rise to ill-health in the world, and at the same time will pray to his Lord for future illumination on these two subjects; then, if he receives light from behind the Veil, he will act in accordance therewith, otherwise he will avail himself of the ways in vogue. This is the true way to assert God and deny evil. If we believe in the Creator and in His Wisdom, everything around us must have some purpose. We give the lie to His work if

we do not use the things which the Lord has been gracious enough to create for us. Drugs disclose wonderful properties. They are all purposive and act as elixirs in curing some diseases.

I do not deny healing powers, claimed by Christian Scientists, I intend to deal with them later, and I observe that these powers are more efficacious in some cases than in others; but both are the ways of the Lord, and one cannot be dispensed with in the pursuit of the other. Hunger would be, perhaps, a better illustration. I have known cases where Muslim divines have faced hunger for months, they fast—contenting themselves with less than an ounce of food a day, to cultivate certain occult powers, and yet they keep their health. Thus it was, too, with the Holy Prophet when he says, 'God feeds me and keeps me perfect'. But that is not a normal condition and cannot be continued beyond a certain period. Jesus fasted for 40 days, but in his life he enjoyed the blessings of God. I wish Christian Science could enable us to dispense with this ministering to the wants of our inner man for ever, through contemplation, for then three fourths of the troubles of the world would be over.

Hunger is an evil, but can the denying of it by meditation give us satisfaction? Are they likely to achieve beauty or riches, simply by meditation—by denying ugliness and poverty? and if indeed such results be possible, why should they not hit on a course of meditation that will enable us to close our kitchens?

It is none the less a happy sign that this movement, like other Western movements, is undoubtedly moving in the direction of Islamic truth.

If Allah be all Goodness and Beauty and the antithesis of all things that are evil and ugly, affirmation of good is affirmation of Allah, and negation of every and any thing other than Allah. This is the Muslim formula.

La-illaha ill-Allah. Muhammad-er-Rasul-Allah. "There is no other Deity (or object of adoration or obedience) but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger". The whole trouble in the world of religion arose from the wrong conception of God. Difference in beliefs follows the differences we hold against each other on the attributes of God. As for instance, the Muslim conception of God is different from the Church conception of the Deity, as the following short chapter of Qur-án shows.

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Say: He, Allah, is One.
Allah is He on Whom all depend.
He begets not, nor is He begotten.
And none is like Him. (Chap. cxii.)

In this sense, the God of the Jews differs from the God of the Hindus and other religions. God, no doubt, is one and the same; whatever we know of Him, is through the attributes that have been taught to us by some religion; and the religions differ in this respect. A Muslim, therefore, while reciting his formula of faith, has

as well, to assert that he believes only in such attributes of Allah as were revealed to him through the Messengership of Muhammad.

If the Quranic attributes of God exhaust the list of good and beautiful things, then the contemplations of the Christian Scientists ought to be based on Muslim lines. Whenever he is in trouble he will find the remedy for that trouble in one of the Names of Allah; he must meditate on that very Name in the way of affirmation and deny all that is antagonistic or contrary thereto. Then, he must survey the Universe around him, and study those ways of God, through which He has given expression to that particular Name.

Such meditation will lead him into the realm of science and scientific research; whereas the present attitude of Christian Science is not favourable to the furtherance of knowledge — or of scientific discovery. For, in the realm of science, nothing is invented — in the modern applied sense of the word; we only discover what has already been created by God, for our benefit.

If the Spirit of God has expressed Himself in everything around us, to use created things for their appointed purpose will only be to keep ourselves in harmony with that Divine Mind, which brought those things into existence.

Is not the taking of medicine, only to restore our disordered nature into harmony with God?

Good and Evil are ever on the lips of the advocates of these new cults, but if ingratitude is

an evil, then are we not guilty of ingratitude towards our God if we ignore or misuse His gifts?

Drugs contain wonderful properties. The world would have been a millenium if it had known all that has been hidden away in these drugs by God. Is it not an ingratitude towards God if we discourage their use? In any case, however, the Movement is not altogether beside the mark. It needs guidance, and a human mind unaided by the Divine Revelation cannot solve the problem. One day, they must needs come to the Qur-án, for enlightenment; and the sooner the better.

## CHAPTER XVII.

# MYSTIC HEALING IN ISLAM.

CLAIRVOYANCE, clairaudience, the reading of each other's hearts, the transference of one's thought to another's mind, the exercise of will power upon others, and last, but not least, the healing of illnesses without resorting to any of the various forms of treatment in vogue, are generally taken to-day as indicative of advanced spirituality. They, in themselves, (as I remarked before) are not the proof of an evolved soul, they are but the accessories of a high spirituality.

These powers have sometimes been observed in persons whose lives are not enviable especially in the case of healing power, that is to say, the cultivation of mesmeric influence, that may enable a person to cure sickness and disease. Suggestions given under hypnotism have often proved helpful in restoring health.

The science of Neurology, though of recent growth, has enabled its experts to perform the miracles of the olden days, in curing lameness, blindness and the like infirmities, within a short time without the use of medicine. The healers have often found that diseases arising out of functional disorders of the organs and nerves are easier to cure than those arising out of organic trouble, which

in some cases baffle all healing efforts. The mind exercises a stronger hold on the nervous system than on the rest of the body. A cultured will power may work wonders in nerve troubles, and this has been observed to be true even in the case of people who are, otherwise, of ungodly life. I admit that purity of life and godly ways, are a great help in attaining such abnormal powers, but these powers in themselves prove nothing. Therapeutical, electrical and surgical treatments are all in a sense based upon the same principles, as is this so-called system of healing. This I will explain later. The human frame is the epitome of the universe, and contains everything of the world in a condensed form. The maintenance of health depends upon the maintenance of the various components of the body in their normal quantity. Deficiency in any one of these, creates illness. Chlorosis, — Green-sickness, and many other forms of anaemia may be the outcome of various pathological changes in the system, but deficiency of iron in the system, is mostly the root of all. If a physician obtains a cure by administering iron in one form or another, he is only bringing the system of his patient in tune with nature. Muslim therapeutical treatment and physiology, as well as Muslim mystic healing, started with one principle, which was lucidly formulated by the fourth Khalif, Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, when he said, "Man is a microcosm. Everything is in him, and he need not go to the outer world".

Physiologists in Islam accepted this principle as the religion of truth, and based all their researches on the first part of the Khalif's aphorism. They tried to find out the various components of every human organ and used those components for the treatment of the respective organs when diseased—a method, in a way analogous to the present day system.

Neuroglia or brain substance, as physiological chemistry shows, chiefly consists of nuclein and nucleo-proteids, lecithin and various phosphates; and many brain complaints are treated by administering these in different forms. Gastric juice is supposed to be composed of hydrochloric acid, water and various salts; hence the use of saline and acid mixtures,when treating stomach troubles. Similarly, ox-gall is sometimes used to stimulate the liver in secreting bile.

The second part of the saying of Hazrat Ali became the guide of the mystic healers in Islam. Everything is in you, and you need not go and seek for it in the outer world.

The human mind is a vast creative agency, composed of inconsistent and contrary faculties; but it knows how to put one in the background, for the time being, and bring the other into prominence. Weeping und laughter are antagonistic to each other, but the mind knows how to make one faculty absolutely non-existent while its contrary is at work. The average person, when weeping, cannot there and then, continue to smile or laugh, but as these functions are of the com-

ponents of consciousness—which is the immediate essential feature of the mind—therefore, with some little effort a person can succeed in weeping and laughing at the same time; and this accomplishment, if such it can be called, exhibits itself quite naturally in the case of hysteria.

The mind has also the power to control the body. Its various phases include change of colour. Anger engenders heat, and fear, or a sudden shock, will freeze the whole system. A man's duty is to develop the creative power of his mind to such an extent that he may be able to bring into play any one organ of his body, to the exclusion of the rest.

If the human body, as Hazrat Ali says, has everything of the universe within it, and a developed mind knows how to bring it into play, the mystic healer, through the exercise of his mind will take the medicine required to treat an illness, from the system itself.

The principles under which the vaccine injections are given will perhaps throw some light on the matter. No sooner does the human system become poisoned in some way or another, than nature begins to create "anti-bodies" to kill the germs of the poison. No antidote from without is sent into the system, everything has been procured from within; and this method of treatment may, in the future, prove to be more efficacious than the administration of antidotes from without; for it awakens the sleeping nature, and puts her on the alert. She was lethargic and

the vaccine injection has shaken her up. She sets to work and collects all the material from within the system that may counteract the poison. This clearly shows that there is everything in the system to meet every kind of illness, if we know how to utilize it at the time of need.

There are atomic ingredients of quinine in the system, but only a mind gifted with its full measure of creative power, can accumulate them into a sufficient quantity for the treatment of a feverish temperature.

I have just said that the mind is capable of controlling everything in the body—but how is it to utilize that capacity?

The principle by which that is achieved, is the principle which underlies the mystic system of healing in Islam. The mental development essential thereto is not achieved by the mere affirmation and negation of two contrary things.

It is the greatest possible sin, in my opinion, to discourage normal methods in the treatment of disease; because the working of the occult power of the mind is not an easy task.

The human mind in the human body is capable of performing the same function as the God Mind in the Universe.

All the atoms that compose the universe exist in the human frame.

If, therefore, the God Mind creates various medicines and drugs from the world of atoms, through atomic combination and permutation,

then the human mind, when its powers have become developed, will be able to do the same.

"If you know your mind, you know your God", says the Prophet — which means that your mind is after the God Mind. You must imbue yourself with His Attributes, and unless you reach this climax of spirituality, you cannot attempt to do things by mere imagination or concentration of mind.

Wrong notions and mistaken theories are today, playing havoc with the human intellect. Cranks and swindlers are befogging the unsuspecting mind of the average man and keeping him away from the real truth.

Healing by hypnotic suggestion, has, I think, some bearing on the subject, for the human mind in its nascent state, being entangled with the various passions that arise from its physical nature, cannot freely exercise its power on that physical nature.

The hypnotist frees the mind from those shackles by causing a sort of deep slumber to fall on all the passions and impulses which have been suppressing the human mind. The mind then becomes a free agent, with all its power at its command, but it is at the same time in a passive state, amenable to all external influences. A suggestion from without works wonders; and for this very reason, treatment under hypnotism is dangerous. The good or bad condition of the active agent is more than likely to affect the mind of the passive agent.

This phenomenon, however, proves that the human mind, when freed from the shackles of the physical nature, can do wonders.

Now, the object of the mystic side of Islam is to elevate the human mind to that stage.

We must lift up our minds and enable them to control everything in us; which thing being achieved, we can not only heal others, but do, practically any of the things which have been labelled "miracles".

People get excited over miracles, whereby dead bodies have been restored to life, the blind have received their sight and the lame have walked.

Do we not see the re-animation of dead nature at the commencement of every spring? Does not a clot of blood get ears, eyes and brain when in an embryonic condition?

The Great Mind in the Universe, performs all this, but that Mind, though in the universe is still out of the universe; seeing that it is free from the dominance of the universe. We have an image of the same Mind in this little universe of the human frame. If we free this image from the dominance of the body, our mind will do the same within the universe of our body that the Great Mind is doing in the great universe without. It is quite possible that a healer with a developed mind can secure the same result as a qualified medical man in treating an illness. So far, the contention is reasonable; but it is not every sufferer from disease that can exercise his power of mind (submerged as it is the ocean of the

passions) in treating his own illness — as the Christian Scientist would suggest.

He has not the qualification of a developed mind; how then can the claims of Christian Science hold good? Stray cases, here and there, are no proof, for the patient may possibly have been bearing a cure, his own nature may have been in process of restoring him to health, though the treatment of physicians could not reach the goal; but by chance, the patient comes under the influence of Christian Science, and gets the health which was to come even without permitting nature to perfect her work. Mesmeric passes, used by Spiritualists in their healing circle are only the operation of the magnetic power in us. They have nothing to do with spirituality, nor is the success of such a healer in any way an index of the advancement of his mind, though it may prove him to be possessed of concentrative power, and an ability to dominate the will of others.

Herein, I have explained the real philosophy of the mystic healing in Islam. Muslim divines never care much for such achievements, their main purpose being to unshackle the human mind from the clothing of its physical nature, which is suppressing the expression of its power. The moment that this grand object is attained, the power of healing and many other occult powers come to him as a sequel.

The principles of mystic healing and the method which enables man to achieve this power have

been very lucidly illustrated in the beautiful parable of the Qur-án.

> "And your Lord revealed to the bee, saying, 'Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build: Then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your Lord submissively. There comes forth from within it a beverage of many colours, in which there is healing for men; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect".

The mind of the bee in the whole animal kingdom has been discovered to possess a wonderful capacity for following fixed and prescribed lines. She will go miles after miles in search of food, and to suck the necessary material to creat homey from within herself. But when she returns back to her hive she never swerves from the way which she pursued when going forth in her quest—not by one-thousandth part of an inch. She follows the self-same track on her way back. It is to this that my quotation refers when it says, "And walk in the ways of your Lord submissively". A beverage with such wonderful powers as the honey used in the Oriental materia medica, to treat numberless diseases, comes from within, not from without.

The quotation ends with the moral:—"There is a sign in this for a people who reflect".

The lesson is this; that inasmuch as everything is contained within the human frame, there is, within that frame, material for healing every illness. Be like the busy bee. She is inspired,

and acts upon her inspiration. Man, too, stands in need of a revelation from God. The revelation is sent to show him the way, and he has to walk in the ways of his Lord submissively.

Just as the bee never swerves from the ways of the Lord, and pursues them with implicit submission, so must we act upon the revealed directions given to us through His Messengers. If we do the same, we shall creat a beverage of many properties and colours from within ourselves or from within the patient for whom we are striving, which will bring health.

Here you have the whole explanation of the phenomenon. We sow seeds within our frame, but do we not observe that a wrong planting of the seeds brings not even a seedling, to say nothing of fruit? If we put the seed upside down it will branch out in the wrong way and will die very soon. We have to go to the gardener to show us the way of gardening. The garden which is so much spoken of in the Bible and the Qur-án under the name of Paradise or Heaven, is the garden of our own heart. Out of the human heart will grow forth a beautiful garden, if we put into it the right seeds in the right way, and irrigate them rightly. The revelation from God was sent to teach us those ways. The Messengers of old time, among them Jesus and Moses, came to teach us the same lesson. The records of their teachings have become marred by time and interpolation, but the Qur-án remains perfect as it came. Man without Divine help can

achieve nothing, especially in the development of his occult powers; and all the efforts, which are being made in western lands will bring forth no fruit. Men will have to come to the Qur-án, and to the Muslim divines to learn the ways. In these pages I have only outlined certain principles, the reasonable nature of the Muslim system, and its superiority over all that is now in vogue in the West.

# CONCLUSION.

In conclusion I have only to recapitulate very briefly the movements under discussion in these pages. Necessary as they are, individually, to meet the various demands of the human mind, they are not in themselves sufficient. The mind of man may be likened to an ocean, which must be fed by various tributaries and rivers. But if the perfect religion is that which takes the best from all these contributing movements, in their cumulative form, then that perfect religion is Islam. Universal Brotherhood in a practical form, has been the product of Islam alone. In these days of self-centred sordidness, and narrow commercialism, if any community or creed breathes of universal fraternity, it is Islam. Has not Islam anticipated Theosophy and Socialism?

If the belief in the life after death and the accountability for our actions in this life and the hereafter, are the claimed verities of Spiritualism, they are also the two parts of the seven articles of faith in Islam. The Qur-án not only explains the nature of the life beyond the grave, but shows the way to make it brilliant. Even the phenomenal side of the movement has been discussed and investigated by the Muslim Divines, although they are too nearly interested in the development of the mind to be taken

up overmuch with anything which merely serves to feed curiosity.

The New Thought and Higher Thought philosophies, beautiful as they are in many ways are in no sense or degree an improvement on Islam; while Christian Science is, as I have shown, only an imitation of Islam in its initial form.

If these movements had been a necessity, is it conceivable that God would have suffered us to remain ignorant of them for the last two thousand years?

But, on the other hand, if all these philosophies and religions were taught to humanity in days of old, their recurrence is not likely to have remained in abeyance for the last two thousand years. We Muslims believe that whatever is needful for human growth and culture comes from God. If the whole world is the manifestation of the God mind, all its components must conform to the Divine Will for their growth and perfection, and we need knowledge of that Will, if we are to bring our faculties to perfection. The knowledge must come from God, and it came from time to time through His various messengers who have given us guidance and direction for the control of our movements. It gave an insight into the secrets of our nature, and when that knowledge had become polluted and tainted with human assertiveness, it was restored and made pure by the coming of a Prophet. Jesus belonged to this race of Prophets. He was the last of the House of Jacob. He brought the knowledge, though, as he himself says, he could not give the whole truth.

Just before his departure from the world, he referred to the coming one, whose mission it would be to give the whole truth. Muhammad came, and with him, the promised revelation.

The very fact that all these movements, and many others, have been foreshadowed in their real form in the pages of the Qur-án, proves that the knowledge given in the Book, comes from God, especially when we consider that all the verses of the Qur-án were repeated on the lips of one who did not know how to read or write—who sprang from a country that made a boast of ignorance like Arabia. The Arabs of his day, and for centuries before, had remained aloof from the culture and enlightenment of the world. They were in a most backward condition, morally, spiritually and intellectually; and yet the country brings forth a personality with such a wonderful treasure of knowledge. Again, we find that the literature of these Western movements, consists for the most part in the summing-up of aims and ideals, but lacks guidance for the achievement of the object.

In Islam, we find everything perfectly systematized. Islam deals with every aspect of the question—discussing, providing, protecting. In short, we find a clear cut, royal road to success in any and every one of our various pursuits. There are many ways of reaching the top of the hill, some are crooked, some are long, some more risky than others, but among them there is always a path short and immune from all danger. The Qur-án shows us that path.

I would say to my friends of those various movements, "You are on your way to the truth. You have risen from the life of lethargy. You have unshackled your mind from the thraldom of dogna. Something noble and wonderful is inviting you towards itself. With heart and soul you are striving to achieve your ideals, but you need the beacon light, you need a lighthouse, a guide to lead you clear of quagmire and morass, a pilot to take you into harbour. I find very little of these things in all your literature, and only the Qur-án can help you in your journey."